

# erótica

ASPECTS OF THE EROTIC IN AUSTRALIAN ART

Cedric Flower



SUN · ACADEMY SERIES



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General Editor : Cedric Flower

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*Front cover:*

**The Alchemy (detail)**

Mixed media mural on hardboard panels. Each panel 203 cm × 30 cm

Brett Whiteley

Collection: Mr R. C. Packer

*Title page:*

**Nymph Awaiting Marquis (1975)**

Etching. 25.5 cm

Paul Delprat

Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Back cover:*

**The Chemise (1945)**

Pen. 38 cm high

Francis Lyburner

Private collection

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The publishers wish to thank Mrs Janet Glad for permission to reproduce the art of Norman Lindsay.



e rotic art in Australia? As recently as ten years ago the idea of such a book would have seemed preposterous. Few publishers would have risked having their names associated with an exploration of local erotica even if they'd believed in its existence. Indeed, the first reaction of many people to the theme of this book was: 'Erotic Australian art? Is there such a thing?'

The idea that Australian art is free from any form of eroticism is a curious one. If true (which demonstrably it is not) it would make Australia unique among the nations of the world. Which is not to say that we haven't been, until recent times, a repressive society with odd ideas about sex and nudity. No-one could pretend that Australians are not moved by the same erotic impulses that propel the rest of humanity, but the hand of the wowsers has lain heavy on the land. Nudity was 'not nice' and sex was something men discussed in pubs—and at a very low level of discussion too.

Well, all that's over, thank Eros, and the wowsers element, if not in full retreat, is at least on the defensive. It seems incredible that in the 1930s colour reproductions of female nudes by Modigliani were forbidden entry to the country by customs officials, who operated on a rule of thumb staggering in its simplicity. Any nude picture showing a hint of pubic hair (and Modigliani's did) was a filthy picture, lewd and obscene.

During those dark ages the books that some authoritarian nits thought we shouldn't read represented a goodly part of the classics of ancient and modern literature.

Nowadays, anyone over eighteen can buy almost anything from porno books to sex aids in blank-faced shops, and the censorship of films is, in general, more liberal than it is in London.

All this is for better or worse depending on points of view, and the attempt to define a line on the shifting sands between what is pornographic and what is merely erotic or sensual is so difficult that it may well be better to leave it alone to sort itself out.

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this book, a line has to be drawn and some criteria used. Neither the author nor the publishers believe that there is anything reproduced here that would cause gross offence to any intelligent adult person.

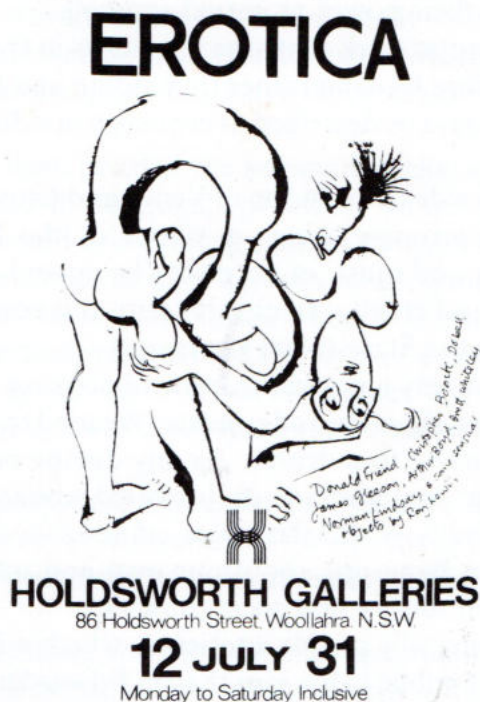


Fig. 1 Poster design by Donald Friend for the *Erotica* exhibition held at the Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney, 1976.



Half the work has been publicly exhibited and about a third drawn from the Erotica Exhibition held in Sydney's Holdsworth Galleries in 1976. Soon after the exhibition opened there was a Pavlov dog reaction from the police, acting on a complaint from a shocked citizen. The public watchdogs were called off by the New South Wales Premier Neville Wran. In one of the most sensible statements ever uttered by a local politician, the Premier said: 'I don't think that it is the place for the police or anyone else to be setting themselves up as judges of community standards. The day is long past when some display of genitalia or copulation is regarded by the mature person as offensive'.

Surely there can be no disputing that this is a much saner and healthier attitude than the situation of a decade ago when the police could close an art show or stop a theatrical performance. What could be more ludicrous than the spectacle of some law officer, who sees things in the course of his duties that would sicken most of us for life, standing up in court to say that he was shocked out of his mind by the sight of naked bodies in the theatre? Or deeply offended by a drawing of copulating lovers in a commercial gallery?

As for nudity (and there is a great deal of nudity in this book) we seem to be getting over our traumas about naked bodies. We are accepting the idea of beaches set aside for nude bathing and it is interesting to note that what opposition there is, is not to nudity as such. Objection centres on excessive car parking in suburban streets and the fear that 'perverts' will leap on unclothed bathers and clothed residents alike, from every bush.

Nudity, in itself, has little to do with eroticism. Or aesthetic pleasure either, as anyone who has joined a representative band of nude bathing fellow-citizens can attest.

Our erotic response to naked bodies has to do with circumstance and presentation. While nudity has always been a potent factor in erotic art, it is only one of many.

Erotic feelings are something we all experience and if denied or repressed they'll surface in some form or another. Eroticism in art externalizes those feelings which are an intimate part of our complexity as human beings. Depending on the climate of the times, the artist can be explicit, or he can convey eroticism by the use of symbols and choice of subject matter.

Eroticism can, and often does, help exorcize hidden fears and dark desires. In the great days of religious art the fascination for characters like Judith and Salome lay less in their biblical importance than in their power as sexual symbols.

It can be said that any erotic work that stirs us puts us in the role of voyeur. But the true voyeur gets his excitement from looking rather than doing and finds his needs better catered for by pornography, which could be described as eroticism in a dirty raincoat, unsullied by any pretensions to art.

Pornography is the dark side of the moon of Venus and Eros. The addict is forever calling for madder music and for stronger wine—a victim of the law of diminishing returns. Pornography is never tender and must, of necessity, be devoid of humour as it explores the glum world of degradation and cruelty. In covert forms it is sometimes condoned by society (Victorian England) and by the State (Nazi Germany).

One aspect of erotica, largely ignored in various books on the subject published during the last decade, is its capacity to liberate and educate. We tend to regard our present society as sexually liberated and permissive to a degree. As any doctor or social worker can testify, a surprising number of people are ignorant or inhibited about the nature of sexuality. In Australia, sexual incompatibility is still the major cause of divorce. It seems that there is a murky reservoir of Victorian hang-ups about our own and other people's sexuality which causes a great deal of human misery and social mischief.

Despite the beliefs of some silly people, eroticism, whether in art, theatre or literature, is not likely to lead to the sort of public behaviour that an Edwardian actress feared may frighten the horses. But it could help clear the air of much unnecessary neurosis and help us accept sexuality for what it is—a necessary and enjoyable part of our human condition.



## EROTICISM IN WESTERN ART

One constant factor in western art has been a pre-occupation with the nude. It is foolish to pretend that portrayals of the naked human body can exist in some 'pure' form divorced from all erotic response, even if the response is low-keyed and comparatively minor in our overall appreciation of a work of art. Few people would agree these days with the 19th century concept that 'if the nude is so treated that it raises in the spectator ideas appropriate to the material subject, it is false art and bad morals'.

This philosophy damns for a start all those luscious nudes of Titian and Rubens who beguile with false modesty as they clutch at the sensual paraphernalia of bits of fur and velvet.

Kenneth Clark, in his splendid book *The Nude*, disposes of this very smartly. He says that no nude, however abstract, should fail to arouse some vestige of erotic feeling. If it fails to do so it is likely to be (and here Clark turns the above stricture neatly on its head) 'bad art and false morals'.

He goes on to say that the desire to grasp and be united with another human body is too fundamental a part of our nature to be ignored and we are influenced by it even in our judgement of 'pure form'. Clark's book deals solely with the nude in art and is not concerned with erotic elements as such. But for the artist who wishes to express his own erotic feelings—or exploit ours—this ready-made response is a springboard from which he can dive into whatever sea of sensuality suits him best.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that in non-western cultures—notably those of the Far East—nudity plays a minor role in the depiction of erotic scenes of the type favoured by Japanese printmakers; and the portrayal of nudity, even without erotic intent, is quite alien to Chinese culture. When Australia sent an exhibition of landscape painting to The People's Republic of China in 1976, colonial paintings showing Aborigines in a state of nature were excluded by request, as certain to offend.

In the history of Western art the erotic thread is not too difficult to trace. In primitive cultures, and those of great sophistication such as India's, works that we might consider erotic or even obscene are generally part of a cultural concept embracing religion, philosophy, and a good deal else besides. Their attitude to sex is fundamentally different from ours and in many ways more civilized. They could well be amazed at the prurience of much 19th century Western art that used erotic elements as a piquant sauce to enliven subject matter often pretending to a high moral tone.

Such inhibitions would have puzzled the ancient Greeks, who had few of their own in matters of sex. They delighted in portrayals of sexual romps and their pantheon of gods behaved with a licence that would bring police charges today. They felt no reserve about the display of genitalia and the attitude of later cultures in applying figleaves to their sculpture would have been shocking to Greek sensibilities. Their domestic Herms were often phallic; those in honour of Hermes were sacred and took the form of a post topped with the god's head and with a phallus mid-way up the shaft. When Alcibiades was accused of knocking off the genitals during a drunken spree, it was considered such an act of sacrilege that he had to flee from Athens.

Roman erotica is probably best expressed in literature although the Greco-Roman frescoes unearthed at Pompeii are an indication of the way many of their villas were decorated. The darker side of Latin eroticism was the sado-masochism that fed on the bloody spectacles of the arena.

With the advent of Christianity erotica went underground, if it went anywhere at all. All portrayals of sensuality were frowned upon—all depictions of the nude were suspect. St Paul exhorted women to bind up their hair for fear of provoking lustful thoughts in men. Noah's nakedness before his sons was regarded as more shocking than the old man's drunkenness.



Byzantine art, with its emphasis on stylized spirituality had no place for the erotic. Within the rigid framework of the Eastern Empire man himself was of little account, cowed as he was by the baleful glares emanating from under the golden domes of Byzantium. Later Mediaeval artists, sadly out of practice, were hard put to create a convincing Eve in purely anatomical terms. Their attempts at the nude are often very beautiful in their own right, but it's doubtful if they are capable of inducing lustful thoughts today. Still, they persevered with their Eves and Bathshebas, all swollen bellies, knobbly knees and flat feet; a far cry from the long-forgotten Kores and goddesses of Hellas.

It was Cranach, the 16th century German painter, who took the Gothic nude and made her slim, elegant and, to modern eyes, desirable. Whether she appears in the guise of a sacred or profane character she introduces all the falderals of eroticism: the picture hat, the jewellery, the ineffectual wisps of transparent stuff.

Those slim lovelies re-occur in the late Renaissance art of the French school of Fontainebleau—one of the high points of Western eroticism. And very curious some of them are, portrayed sitting about in baths or gently pinching each other's nipples.

The whole period of the Renaissance is rich in erotic imagery either concealed as religion (those repentant Magdalenes) or as mythology (Venus with Mars, Adonis, Cupid, or whoever—and in the case of Titian, with a series of fully-clothed organ players).

A minor painter, Giulio Romano, provided Italian Ducal palaces with erotic frescoes as well as producing a series of drawings of sexual intercourse. They survive as engravings by another hand, and show men and women of heroic proportions—plus an occasional satyr—coupling in all manner of extraordinary postures.

The depiction of sexual coupling is the ultimate in eroticism. As a basic human experience we all like to do it, and most of us enjoy seeing it pictured unless it is grossly offensive in treatment. For the artist the subject has much to commend it apart from the desire or necessity to please a patron. It is yet another exercise in the study of the naked human form with the added challenge of solving the purely formal problems of two interlocked bodies. The Renaissance fascination with Leda and the swan was due not only to the titillating subject matter but to the complex problem of welding woman to swan in a way aesthetically acceptable and biologically feasible.

The lusty sensuality of much Renaissance art was due in large part to an obsession with the mastery of the nude coupled with the humanist philosophy of the time, which placed Man proudly at the centre of the universe.

It was a far cry from the theatrical prettiness of 18th century French Rococo art. There's a fusty air about those erotic boudoire fumblings on rumpled beds, uncomfortably suggestive of the illicit 'quickie' that requires a maid on constant door-watch. Lacking any feeling for genuine passion they appear, for all their elegance, as heartless and frivolous as the society that produced them. Fragonard and Boucher were masters of such boudoire paintings and the period did produce one erotic masterpiece: Boucher's famous nude study of Miss O'Murphy, a mistress of Louis XV.

A more lasting and interesting phenomenon was the way in which the heirs of Michelangelo developed the eccentricities of Mannerism. The nervy, neurotic sensuality of Mannerist art provided a fertile climate for the full flowering of the Italian Baroque.

The Catholic Church, weakened by corruption and by the spread of Protestantism, saw that the way to survival was to counter the austerities of the rival dogma by embracing the exuberance of the new style in all its forms and manifestations. The Baroque could offer everything in excess. It was theatrical, sensual, and like nothing that had gone before. In the service of religion it bombarded the senses from all sides and eroticism entered the Church on the side of the angels.

Angels indeed! Paradise never appeared more seductive. They crowded the churches,



swooping about on domes and beckoning from balustrades. No longer the simple pretty creatures of earlier times, they have a sexual presence not at all in keeping with the scriptures. Those Roman angels on the bridge to the Castel 'Sant' Angelo have the typical Baroque problem of keeping their clothes on. Beset by some spiritual breeze, they barely manage to cover their breasts and hoisted skirts display, at very least, one dimpled knee and shapely leg. They are less spiritual creatures than some heavenly chorus line.

The martyrdom of saints and the bliss of heaven are conveyed with operatic fervour with a great deal of fluttering and flapping. The ubiquitous angels spread over Europe, tumbling out of domes, hovering up walls and presiding, in the forms of pretty boys and girls, over the ecstasy of saints and the death of Popes.

Bernini's great sculptural masterpiece *The Ecstasy of St Teresa* has become a cliché of eroticism. A visitor from another culture would certainly surmise that the saint was in a swoon from a different cause entirely; a conclusion re-inforced by the winsome youth who stands over her with a symbolic golden arrow.

This heady mixture of sacred and profane was wickedly obvious, but it worked. At one level it was as cynical an exploitation of sex in the service of religion as the Islamic idea of paradise.

English eroticism of the 18th and early 19th centuries was a good deal more earthy than its French equivalent, aimed at the squire rather than the marquis. Thomas Rowlandson was its great exponent and his drawings of bucolic revels have a cheerful barnyard honesty that robs them of all offence. He could have put 'Under Royal Patronage' over his studio door: the bulk of his erotic prints and drawings appear to have been commissioned by the Prince Regent and there's a choice collection of them in (of all places) Windsor Castle. If Queen Victoria had been aware of the existence of these works it may well have stiffened her resolve to put an end to that sort of thing, starting from the throne down.

Did that great academician, Sir Joshua Reynolds, indulge himself in painting erotic subjects for his own amusement? If he did none has survived, although his painting of a London link boy posing as Cupid shows he was well aware of the phallic symbolism of a slyly-placed torch.

It is believed that J. M. W. Turner, England's supreme landscape painter, left a collection of his own erotic drawings, but these were destroyed after his death. The mortality rate for erotica is high indeed. The desire of friends and relations to keep reputations unblemished has led to some shocking acts of vandalism.

The classic example is Lady Burton, wife of the traveller and anthropologist Sir Richard Burton, known to most people as the translator of *The Arabian Nights*. The vast and irreplaceable collection of material on sexual customs, amassed by Burton on his travels in Africa and the Middle East, was consigned to the flames by his widow as so much filth besmirching the memory of an otherwise great man. All the poor lady achieved was the odium of generations of scholars.

A similar fate befell seventy monotypes of brothel scenes by Degas. They were destroyed on his death for the same misguided reason.

The Swiss-born English artist Fuseli was more fortunate. A large number of his erotic works survive and are of particular interest with their haunting exploration of the subconscious—an area of art the Surrealists would later explore with greater knowledge and intensity.

The Victorian age, for all its accomplishments in other fields, was one of the most hypocritical, especially in its attitude to what was acceptable in the arts. The official encouragement of noble sentiment and lofty ideals led to all manner of artistic subterfuge of an unedifying sort. The art courts of the Great Exhibition of 1851 exhibited sculpture of high erotic content that was also prurient to a degree. One of the most admired pieces was *The*



*Greek Slave*, which displayed this snide quality at its worst. The description in the official catalogue is worth quoting:

The figure here represented is intended for that of a young and beautiful Greek girl, deprived of her clothing and exposed for sale to some wealthy eastern barbarian, before whom she is supposed to stand, with an expression of scornful dejection mingled with shame and disgust . . . The chains on her wrists are not historical, but have been added as necessary accessories.

'Necessary accessories' means that the chain is artistically arranged to hide the girl's pubes. This lewd object pretending to be art is nothing more than an invitation to lascivious musings. Chain bondage, especially of nude females, was a feature of the art of the period. Mythology and history were ransacked for spicy subjects. As a later commentator remarked: 'it was a fortunate minority among statuary who had the free use of their limbs'.

The suppressed eroticism of the period flowered in other dubious ways. The sentimental attachment of middle-aged men to pre-pubescent girls seems highly suspect to modern eyes even if one such attachment did produce a timeless classic in *Alice in Wonderland*. The high incidence of child prostitution in late 19th-century London remains an ugly fact.

Lord Leighton and his fellow 'Olympians' had carte blanche to produce acres of naked flesh so long as they were sanctified by classic allusion. Had they painted their parlourmaids in their baths, as Degas and Renoir did, instead of Venus at her Greco-Roman toilet, they'd have been hounded out of The Royal Academy and probably out of England.

However, the latter part of the century did produce one great erotic artist in Aubrey Beardsley whose influence was immediate and widespread, even reaching the antipodes. It can be traced in the early etchings of Norman Lindsay and *The Bulletin* cartoonist, Souter. The drawing by Charis Schwarz is as much a tribute to Beardsley as it is to sex.

Beardsley was an exception and it is only in the early 20th century that European artists felt free to abandon all subterfuge and produce work which was openly and explicitly erotic. A group of Viennese artists challenged the reasoning which equated eroticism with pornography and was prepared to suffer persecution and gaol for its beliefs. It was perhaps inevitable that in the aftermath of the First World War other European artists should be excited by the teachings of Freud and become interested in the subconscious as a source of art. Apart from the haunting imagery of works that came to be labelled 'Surrealist', they are, by their very nature, often highly erotic.

Surrealism was, naturally enough, denounced as decadent by Hitler, along with all other forms of 'modernism' in art. Hitler initiated his own State-supported Academy and opted for obscenity. Those heroic nude figures of Nazi painting and sculpture are the blatant mixture of eroticism and prurience that we met earlier in Victorian England, with the emphasis now on the male rather than the female. Scowling men-gods present themselves as genetical specimens, fathers of a paranoid master-race. Because the philosophy that gave these monstrous super-studs birth was impure and anti-human, they appear more evil and obscene than all the filthy pictures from here to Cairo.

After that lesson in the perversity of State-controlled art the post-war freedom of the creative artist seemed doubly precious. As if in celebration of that freedom Pablo Picasso produced a series of prints and drawings on erotic themes in a burst of demonic energy that suggests a last salute to life; the final testament of an aging genius in praise of human sexuality.

Perhaps the long tradition of Western art in praise of Eros is coming to an end. Eroticism could become a more pronounced feature of the shared experience—the 'art happening' that intrigues many young contemporary artists. The taste for sado-masochism that many films foster and exploit may indicate a trend towards stronger meat than that provided by traditional erotica. Certainly, we live in a sex-ridden world of popular culture dominated by



the United States of America. It is not surprising that it was a group of North American artists who took the brashest aspects of today's culture and turned it into Pop Art.

Warhol, Lichtenstein, and Wessellmann are among those American artists who treat erotic themes with a lively sense of satire, making explicit what was covert in the outpourings of the girlie magazines, advertising, and the Hollywood Dream Factory. The conversion into Pop Art is often wickedly funny in its treatment of all the sexual clichés of persuasive marketing. Dreamy ladies with lips parted to receive all manner of consumer goods were early and obvious targets. It only needed a slight change of emphasis to turn them into creatures of ravening lust, and the promoted goods into a new anthology of sex symbols.

Madison Avenue had the last laugh. It took some of the more seemly elements of Pop Art and channelled them back—into advertising.

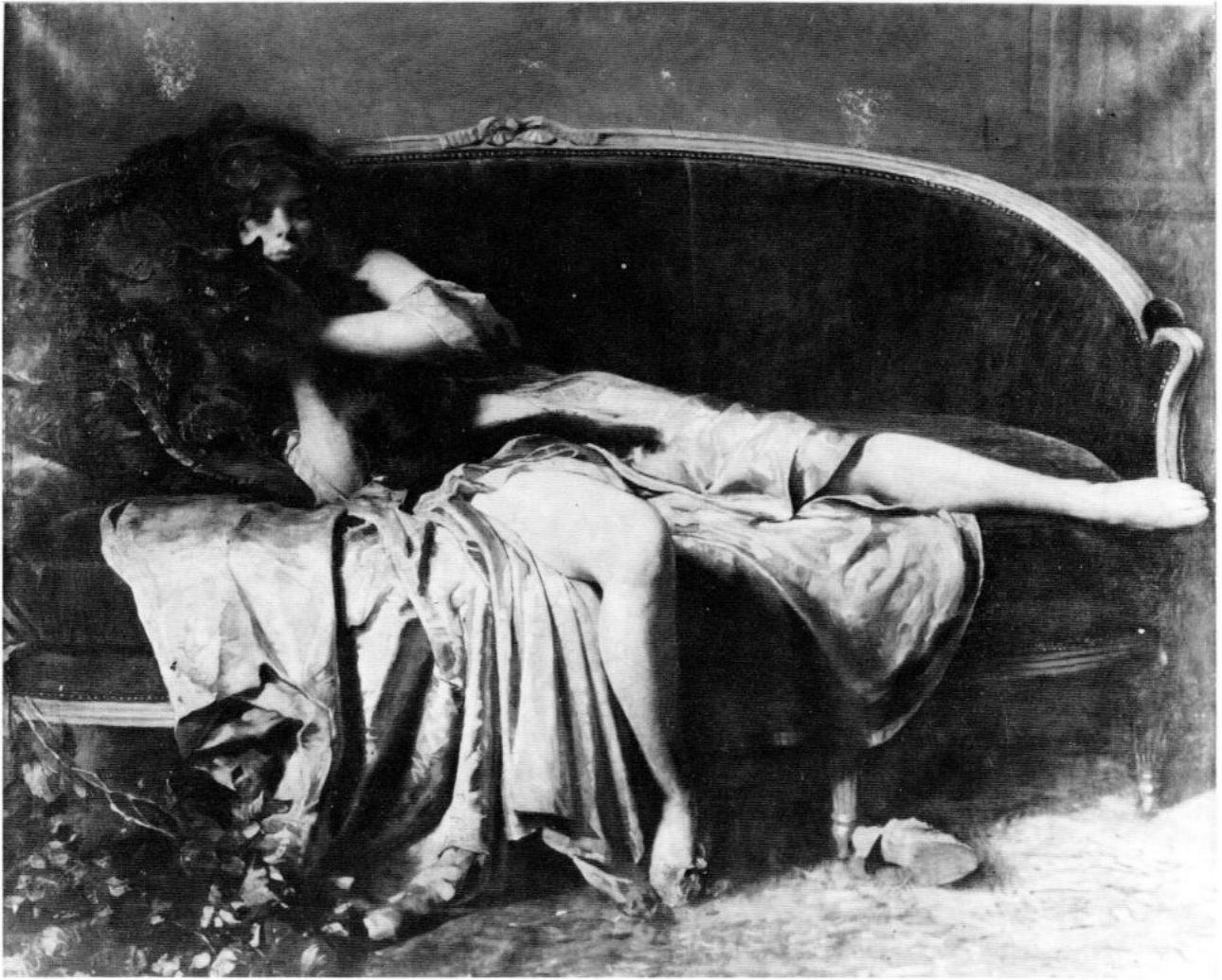


Fig. 2 **Les Félines.** Charles J. Watelet. 1923. Oil on canvas. 103 cm × 128 cm. Art Gallery of N.S.W.

A work by an obscure French artist, this painting is a good example of the type of prurient eroticism that received official approval in Australia in the 1920s. It was purchased by a group of trustees of the National Art Gallery of New South Wales (as it was then called) during a trip abroad. They probably thought it enchanting and there's no doubt as to its competence as a painting. There's no doubt of its erotic content either. All the classic elements of sensuality are lavishly applied: the teasing glimpses of naked flesh, the satin and velvet stuffs, the black pussy cat with its tail neatly placed between the thighs of the smouldering redhead. The best that can be said of it is that it's a better-executed example of a genre painted to hang in saloon bars or worse. It's sad to reflect that for the expenditure of the same money in 1923 the gallery probably could have acquired a Cézanne or a Picasso—or both. The painting has long been relegated to the stacks.



Some of the artists represented here have embraced aspects of Pop Art and given it their own interpretation. John Armstrong, Ken Reinhard, Mike Brown and Martin Sharp have all, in various ways and in various degrees, drawn on the rich mine of contemporary Pop culture. Their work is often funny-erotic and could be considered as offering a release from the social tensions which build up in a society that promises everything and gives little; where sexual success is often equated with buying this, that, or the other thing; and where television commercials are the folk art of our time.

Pop Art, for all its 'sending up' and jokey qualities can be used to express something important. David McDiarmid's *Secret Love* uses a Pop technique and the words of a soppy ballad as a *crie de coeur*—a confession that he has, in 'gay' terminology, 'come out'. It's a far cry from the love that dare not speak its name in Edwardian England.

It is worth noting here that those artists loosely grouped as Pop are often the ones most concerned with social and political issues. Richard Larter reacted to the fall of the Whitlam Government by producing works of protest that use eroticism to express strong feelings about the events of the time and the people concerned.

This use of eroticism to serve a moral purpose extends erotic boundaries far beyond anything Charles Baudelaire had in mind when the poet touched on the subject in one of his essays on art. It is worth quoting just the same:

... I have found myself wishing that the poet, the connoisseur and the philosopher could grant themselves the enjoyment of a Museum of Love, where there would be a place for everything, from St Theresa's undirected affections down to the serious debaucheries of the ages of ennui. No doubt an immense distance separates *Le Départ pour l'île de Cythère* from the miserable daubs which hang above a cracked pot and a rickety side-table in a harlot's room; but with a subject of such importance, nothing should be neglected.

## EROTIC ART IN AUSTRALIA

I once had an aunt, a kind and worthy lady whom I sometimes visited as a child. She was given to religion and good works, and no unseemly conduct or 'questionable' conversation ever took place beneath her roof. The very mention of sex would have brought the Pickwick Plates tumbling off the picture rail.

I remember a great deal about the house and especially the pictures. They were all reproductions and there were two in the bedroom that I found particularly fascinating. They showed women naked except for streaming hair and wisps of pink chiffon, clinging to hornéd moons.

'Mummy, why are those ladies hanging on like that?' I don't recall that I ever got a satisfactory answer.

They were the sort of bedroom pictures sold by emporia in the 1920s, along with 'Mission' beds and wardrobes, and considered 'pretty', 'suitable' and even, I suppose, Art. They were, in fact, pure eroticism and I'm not sure if they weren't sly porn as well. And these in the home of a respectable suburban lady who would sooner have flown to the same moon fondled by those swooning maidens, as have a reproduction of Michelangelo's *David* in the house.

Nor was that all. In the lounge hung a large colour reproduction called 'Re-united', showing a semi-naked redhead ascending into the sky to be clasped in the embrace of a



handsome youth as semi-naked as she, who hurtles down from above. My queries on that one were easier to answer. It seemed that the lady had died and gone to join her husband who'd been waiting up there all the while. Why the lady had not risen naked or in a proper nightgown was not explained, although it now seems obvious enough. If naked, the figures would have been 'vulgar'. If fully clothed the work would have ceased to be erotic—its eroticism slyly concealed under the guise of being a touching and edifying subject.

The pink chiffon wisp syndrome, used as much for titillation as concealment, is much in evidence in a few of the earlier plates in this book. It's a conceit with a long historical background. As Peter Cook says to Dudley Moore in an hilarious sketch on a visit to an art gallery: 'there was an awful lot of gauze flying about in the Renaissance, Dud'.

If Australian society tolerated a certain amount of covert sexuality in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, so long as it was 'tasteful' or 'artistic', there seems no traceable evidence of eroticism in the work of early colonial artists.

It appears unbelievable that erotic work was not produced; sad that little or none has survived. Thomas Wainewright, before he was transported to Tasmania as a convicted forger,



Fig. 4 **How Some of the Galateans 'Man Their Yards' On Shore.** Unknown artist, c. 1868. Pen and coloured wash. Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Once thought to be by S. T. Gill, the drawing is from a much more amateur hand. From the evidence of another drawing by the same artist it appears to have been done in Tasmania. The subject relates to the visit to the Australian colonies of Queen Victoria's son, The Duke of Edinburgh, who toured on the H.M.S. *Galatea* in 1867–8.



was already an artist of some note and a London associate of Fuseli. In the situation in which he found himself, Wainewright was able to win some measure of favourable treatment by applying his talent to drawing portraits of colonial worthies and their simpering children. While he was busy pleasing the mothers with rather insipid pieces of flattery for the parlour wall, may he not have pleased some fathers even more with works for the locked library drawer?

S. T. Gill is another colonial artist who, by virtue of temperament and opportunity, should have produced some erotic drawings. But for all his gusto in recording the rumbustious period of the 1850 gold rushes, he seems to have stopped short of portraying anything unseemly. It's asking too much to believe that Gill never took his sketch book into the brothels of Melbourne and Ballarat. Were the sketches chortled over in private and locked away until consigned to the flames by shocked widows?

We'll probably never know. That such works did exist is proved by the earliest drawing in this book which is not so much erotic as funny-bawdy. Interestingly, it was once loosely catalogued as a Gill.

It is understandable enough in the repressive climate of the Victorian age (re-inforced in Australia by a strong wowser element) that artists should play safe and not offend if they wished to establish a reputation and become acceptable to the trustees of newly-established public galleries. All the same, there is often a strong erotic element in approved subjects drawn from mythology and the scriptures. Just how consciously artists exploited this aspect is debatable and few people would consider William Strutt an erotic artist. Even so, *David's First Victory* is a curious painting with elements that in a pre-Freudian age may have passed unnoticed.

The combination of flesh and fur always has erotic overtones and the young David with his smooth adolescent limbs is mounted on a veritable sea of tactile sensations. David's attitude is curious in the context of the scene portrayed. Remove the kid and the tunic and you have one of the classic poses of a martyred St Sebastian.

By the 1890s artists felt free to paint the nude and art schools attached to state galleries and art societies were beginning to feel that no dreadful consequences need result from students working directly from the nude female model. Arthur Streeton's *Standing Female Figure* of 1895 (probably Circe) is a potent image of the *fin-de-siècle* idea of the temptress.\* The decorative little painting of a nude woman playing a violin is in a different mood. Whatever Streeton's original intention, she appears quaintly funny to modern eyes.

Circe, the mythological temptress who turned men to swine, was an acceptable subject for the nude, and she could, if necessary, be justified on the grounds of teaching a moral to all lascivious males.

Bertram MacKennal, the Melbourne-born sculptor, almost overstepped the mark. His bronze *Circe*, much admired in Paris, had to have its base covered before being exhibited in London since it appeared to show men being swine in advance of their metamorphosis.

The tents of Araby, the harems of the licentious Turk and the Ottoman slave markets provided artists of the 19th century with a rich source of erotic subject matter, excused, if excuse were needed, by the artist's desire for the colourful and exotic and the public's hunger to be thrilled and appalled by tableaux in seraglios and such, where scenes of unbridled lust could be imagined and, perhaps, envied. Charles Conder's lithograph is an innocuous example of the genre, but it could, nevertheless, draw on the same emotive response.

Sid Long's *Flamingoes* was regarded as somewhat scandalous in its day for reasons that now seem obscure. Perhaps people were made uneasy by tenuous echoes from classical

\* Illustrated in *Outlines of Australian Art: The Joseph Brown Collection*. Macmillan, 1973



mythology. Here were not one, but two potential Ledas sharing a pool with what could pass for grotesque parodies of swans.

The small oil by George Lambert is a puzzling work. The beautifully painted nude is not, in itself, so very erotic. The introduction of the other woman bearing a bouquet of flowers is curious and may have been inspired by Manet's once-scandalous painting of *Olympia*. Is the woman a friend visiting the sick or a maid bringing a tribute from an admirer? In either case few women would care to receive another while lying naked on a bed, especially in 1908. Like all problem pictures, it is open to various interpretations.

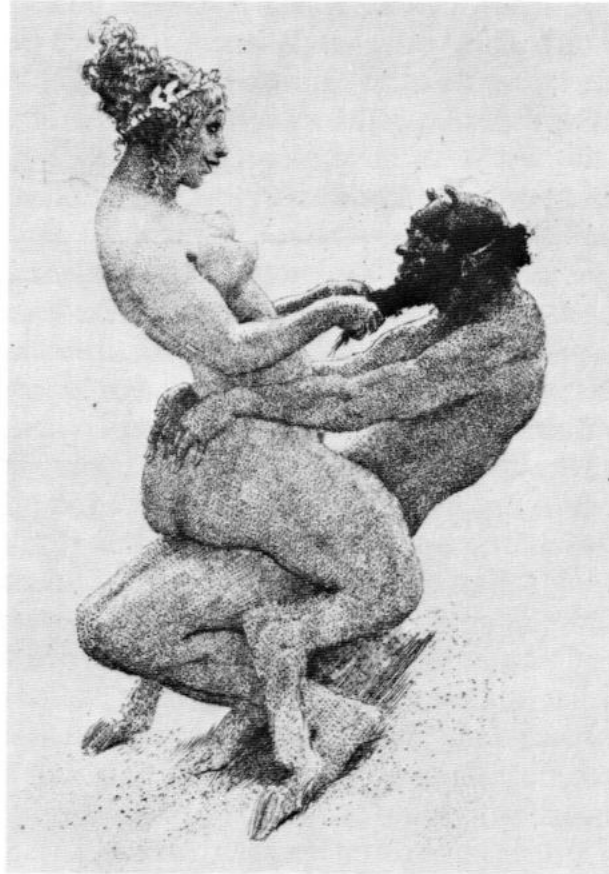


Fig. 3 *Afternoon of a Faun*. Norman Lindsay. Etching, 1926. 9.7 cm × 7.8 cm

In the 1920s nymphs and satyrs came in with a rush. It was a curious phenomenon that looked backwards to the hedonism of some antique golden age and attempted to transpose it onto the Australian scene. In the spirit of classic paganism poets led by Hugh McCrae, Kenneth Slessor, and Leon Gellert filled the bush with the pipes of Pan and the galloping of centaurs. Norman Lindsay was the high priest of the movement, illustrating their poems while creating his own world of nymphs, satyrs, and bacchanalian romps. To quote A. D. Hope: 'the movement to settle Pan and the nymphs, the dryads, fauns and satyrs of Arcadia in the bushland around Sydney was too self-consciously literary; it took no roots in that inhospitable soil and soon died of inanition'.

Although short-lived, the movement did generate a burst of creative energy among a group of highly talented people. Half the fun was in shocking the public who believed that such literary and pictorial paganism must be produced by a depraved group who ran about with vine leaves in their hair and engaged in heaven-knew-what activities; the sort of activity, perhaps, expressed in Rayner Hoff's *Faun and Nymph*, and the lustful animal quality of Frank Lynch's *Satyr*.

If all this pagan vitality was a bit much for the general public they could take comfort in pretty paintings with the dampened-down eroticism of the bedroom pictures acceptable to



one's aunt. Percy Spence's *Three Graces* is a perfect example of the genre. It owes something to the English 'fairy painters' combined with elements of Art Deco Classicism. The subject, although not in itself particularly erotic, serves as an excuse to show three naked or near-naked women from different angles. They revolve like shameless beauty queens eager to win the golden apple, or the trip to Honolulu.

In 1923 a collection of Australian art was shown in London at Burlington House. It was an enormous success, attracting large crowds and much press comment. The main contributing factor was the inclusion of a panel of works by Norman Lindsay. Enough debate had been generated locally about whether such indecent pictures should be included as to give the English press a field day. The Australian Women's Reform League had denounced such bestiality and nudity, declaring that pure-minded citizens should be filled with nausea. A deputation to the New South Wales Minister for Public Instruction claimed that it valued Australia's reputation too highly to have Norman Lindsay included as representative of Australian art: 'it would appear in London as though Australia had a large percentage of degenerates who were afflicted with sex mania . . .'

It all seems funny and old-hat now, but at the time it caused Lindsay great distress. For most of his life the artist was regarded by some as Australia's one undoubted genius, fit to rank with the great masters; and by the public at large as the creator of the lewd nude.

Filthy, blasphemous, indecent; of all Australian artists Norman Lindsay had to endure more abuse from the wowser element in our society than any other. Erotic the best of his work certainly is. It's not a term he would have used, although he accepted bawdy when that was his intent. For all the celebration of hedonism and sexual freedom, the etchings, paintings and drawings rarely suggest a realistic sexual passion between the sexes. Despite lustful looks, the men show remarkable control even during the most frantic bacchanalian revel. To put it bluntly, there's never a hint of any sexual arousal in males, yet Lindsay had few inhibitions about the sexual drives of his panther-women whose caresses are not lavished (or wasted) on the men.

Yet, in the beautiful early etching of a bedroom scene, the artist conveys, with tenderness and humour, a normal male-female relationship free of all literary and mythological references.

It is something of a loss to Australian art that Lindsay didn't pursue this type of contemporary genre scene. In his novels he took a realistic and unsentimental view of sexual relationships while continuing to retreat, as an artist, into the fantasy world of cavaliers, sirens, pirates and satyrs. It is this dichotomy that continues to make Norman Lindsay something of an enigma.

In contrast to Lindsay's raffish nudes, those of his contemporary, Bernard Hall, are cosily domestic. For some time Hall was principal of the National Gallery School in Melbourne. His paintings of the nude are brilliantly executed studio work of the type that most people would accept as respectable. Even so, the use of the usual studio paraphernalia of mirrors, screens, gas fires and kettles on the hob as a setting for sensually painted flesh often generates a low-keyed eroticism. Hall was too fastidious a painter ever to be obvious or blatant although he came close enough in the composition he disarmingly called *Colour Harmony*.

In the period following the Second World War and even more noticeably in the last decade, Australian artists have felt free to explore various aspects of eroticism in a cultural climate where eroticism (of a sort) has become part and parcel of everyday existence. In this climate, a Sydney cinema, specializing in adult-only films, has felt free to decorate the fascia with a sculpture of giant female breasts.

Whether the artistic impulse is directed to male-female relationships or to homoeroticism is immaterial in the light of Baudelaire's wise statement that: 'with a subject of such importance, nothing should be neglected'.



A brief study such as this cannot hope to be comprehensive and the emphasis lies mainly on those contemporary artists whose work has shown a consistent or, if you will, an obsessive interest in erotic themes. With an artist like Brett Whiteley it can be a magnificent obsession indeed. Some of the younger artists represented have only recently taken up residence in Australia and their differing cultural backgrounds have added a diversity and richness to the local art scene, not least in their treatment of erotica. Two of the artists represented here received their training in the art schools of Czechoslovakia. Both Richard Zalbudek and Petr Herel draw on the classic traditions of European art—the former by Renaissance richness of colour and firmness of design; the latter by applying a brilliant etching technique to his Gothic imagery.

Francis Lyburner was, by temperament, a 19th century French Romantic. His early drawings of animals and nudes have a tenderness of feeling that elevates mere draughtsmanship into something resembling an act of love.

The fact that some artists are more fully represented than others in no way implies a value judgement in any general sense. Eroticism is but one of many qualities that can be present in a work of art; its presence or absence makes art neither better nor worse.

Any selection is personal and must acknowledge that one man's erotic response is another man's yuk. Just how much of the erotic impact of a work depends on its subject matter and how much on the artist's treatment of it is determined, finally, by the observer's response.

The martyrdom of St Sebastian was a subject that held great fascination for Renaissance painters, a fascination only partly explained by the opportunity it presented for painting the nude. James Gleeson's version was done soon after the artist returned from a trip to Italy and shows an art historian's understanding of the 15th century conventions of Italian painting and the erotic overtones those conventions could embrace.

It is not only that the saint is traditionally shown as nude (Gleeson's Sebastian is aggressively naked) and tied to a tree or column to be shot to death with arrows. As in the famous paintings by Botticelli and Antonello da Massina, the saint is all too conscious of his own beauty—lost in a narcissistic swoon as he passively accepts the arrows of the brutal soldiery piercing his tender flesh. The comely youth submitting so gracefully to assault from other men has, in most versions of the martyrdom, undeniable suggestions of homosexual masochism.

In a series of later paintings James Gleeson has explored the theme of figures in a landscape. They are strange pictures reflecting the artist's early interest in Surrealism. The naked and vulnerable males, often minute in scale, inhabit dreamscapes that alternate between the seductive and the menacing. The artist's use of the word 'psychoscapes' can best explain what is explainable in such haunting works as *Aurora* and *Totem*.

Paul Delprat's eroticism is down to earth and explicit. His bathroom print is Everyman's secret dream of a cosy domestic situation. *Starry Lash* is a portrait of a Sydney entertainer of some notoriety.

*The Three Wishes of St Martin* is one of a series of prints illustrating Mediaeval Celtic tales. It's a bawdy story of a man who was granted three wishes. The first wish was for a multiplicity of penises, the second for the saint to provide his wife with matching vaginas. Not surprisingly, this led to such a muddle that the third wish was spent in requesting a return to the sexual status quo—a moral tale if ever there was one.

For some artists, eroticism is central to the creative process; for others it's an occasional diversion. With Brett Whiteley the erotic element is all-pervading—seeming to act as an electric charge sparking off a dynamo of energy. With Whiteley the sexual act assumes a sort of cosmic violence almost frightening in its intensity. His lovers engage beyond time and space, appearing at times to copulate in mid-air like demented bumble bees. In the very urgency of his pen line each stroke seems to rush to an orgasmic climax.



On one of the panels which make up *The Alchemy* mural, the lovers could be Adam and Eve exploring their newly-discovered sexuality for the first time. Or it could be the last desperate coupling of the only lovers left on earth.

Donald Friend has always been something of an *enfant terrible* of Australian art; precocious, witty, eclectic, and very talented. His long residence in Bali has given his work a new richness and certainty. Any inhibitions he may have had as to subject matter have long since gone with the trade winds and among the youths of that enchanted island Friend has found no end of comely subjects for his mastery of the nude.

In the drawing of two reclining youths (in fact, the same model drawn twice) a drowsy sensuality is implicit in the very placing of the figures on the page, thigh to cheek—cheek to thigh. Other drawings are more explicit and appear to embrace Balinese folk lore with its mythological beasts and lecherous animals ever ready to ravish none-too-unwilling youths. It would be gross matter indeed without Friend's outrageous humour and seductive technique.

A younger artist who shares some qualities in common with Donald Friend is Christopher Boock. Like Friend, he has drawn on an alien culture, finding in Mogul painting those decorative elements to support his flair for jewel-like colour and precise line. His lively sense of fun, expressed in *Toots Trots Out*, is never quite suppressed even in works as involved, erotic, and impassioned as *In a Glass Darkly*.

As slyly funny are the sculptured objects by Roy Lewis. When someone asked the size of *Executive Toy Horn with Amber Balls*, the bland reply was 'life size'—a remark as funny in its way as the title Martin Sharp has given his screen print.

The title of Tom Arthur's drawing is no help at all; more likely to confuse than clarify. What can it all mean? There is certainly a phallus joined to a cow, and a bed. And what of the squirrels, drawn with the precise observation of a Dürer? A drawing as beautiful and complete as this has no need of meaning beyond its own validity as a work of art.

Arthur Boyd's work, ranging from lyrical landscapes to Brueghelian scenes crowded with incident, is always highly personal. He is a great maker of images and his series of a bride with her Aboriginal consort has an earthy, animalistic quality that would have delighted D. H. Lawrence. The same mood is found in his curious *Nude Washing* of about the same period. As a nude it defies anatomical analysis, while remaining a most potent image.

Since much erotic art is by nature specific it could be supposed that photography would have a natural advantage. But the camera eye can be too beady and too immediate, turning us into voyeurs without that necessary distance and detachment we get from erotic art and sculpture.

A drawing of copulating couples by Whiteley is more acceptable to most people than a photograph of the same subject. Romantics that we are, we can better visualize ourselves in an art situation without the excess of reality that leaves imagination little room to manoeuvre.

Even so, photography can't be ignored and George Swartz's male torso decorated with all manner of erotic symbolism contains scholarly references to the art of the past, erotic and otherwise. The headless torso suggests the mutilated state of some Hellenistic sculpture. The golden light is pure Late Renaissance while the pose and general mood of the work is in the manner of the erotic nude youths painted by Caravaggio.

Mary Ann Haswell's photograph of *The Queen of the Nile* takes reference points from nearer home. The inspiration here is surely those early Norman Lindsay etchings of beaded and feathered sirens.

Women artists have seldom been attracted to erotic subject matter and one has to draw a fairly long bow to find even a trace of it in the work of the many talented women who established reputations in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. It didn't interest Margaret Preston in the least. *The Rose*, one of Thea Proctor's best known prints, could be interpreted to imply a mild lesbianism that was probably never intended.



Still, there are signs that a new generation has few inhibitions about expressing its sexuality. Charis Schwarz's self-portrait as a sphinx figure is from a series called 'It's Great to be an Australian Woman'—a title that may go some way towards explaining the phallic decoration of the legs. It would have shocked Norman Lindsay, despite his fondness for sphinx-figures as symbols of female sexuality.

The right of the artist to explore erotic themes and exhibit his work without suffering censorship and persecution is a healthy sign in Australian society; a measure of social and individual freedom. Whether or not one agrees with the dictum that 'eroticism corresponds to the sex drive in a way that appetite corresponds to hunger' the artist, if he is worthy of the name, exercises an intellectual control over his material no matter how strong the initial sexual impulse may be.

It is this control that separates eroticism from the purely 'sexual' and 'titillating'—a control sadly lacking (for example) in the most popular of locally-made television serials whose very title makes oblique reference to the act of fellatio.

Still, we've come a long way from the hounding of Norman Lindsay when Brett Whiteley could be awarded the 1977 Wynne Prize for a studio interior featuring a sketch of a copulating couple. It failed to provoke one angry letter to an editor, although one woman was heard to remark that she liked the painting very much 'except for that obscenity in the corner'.

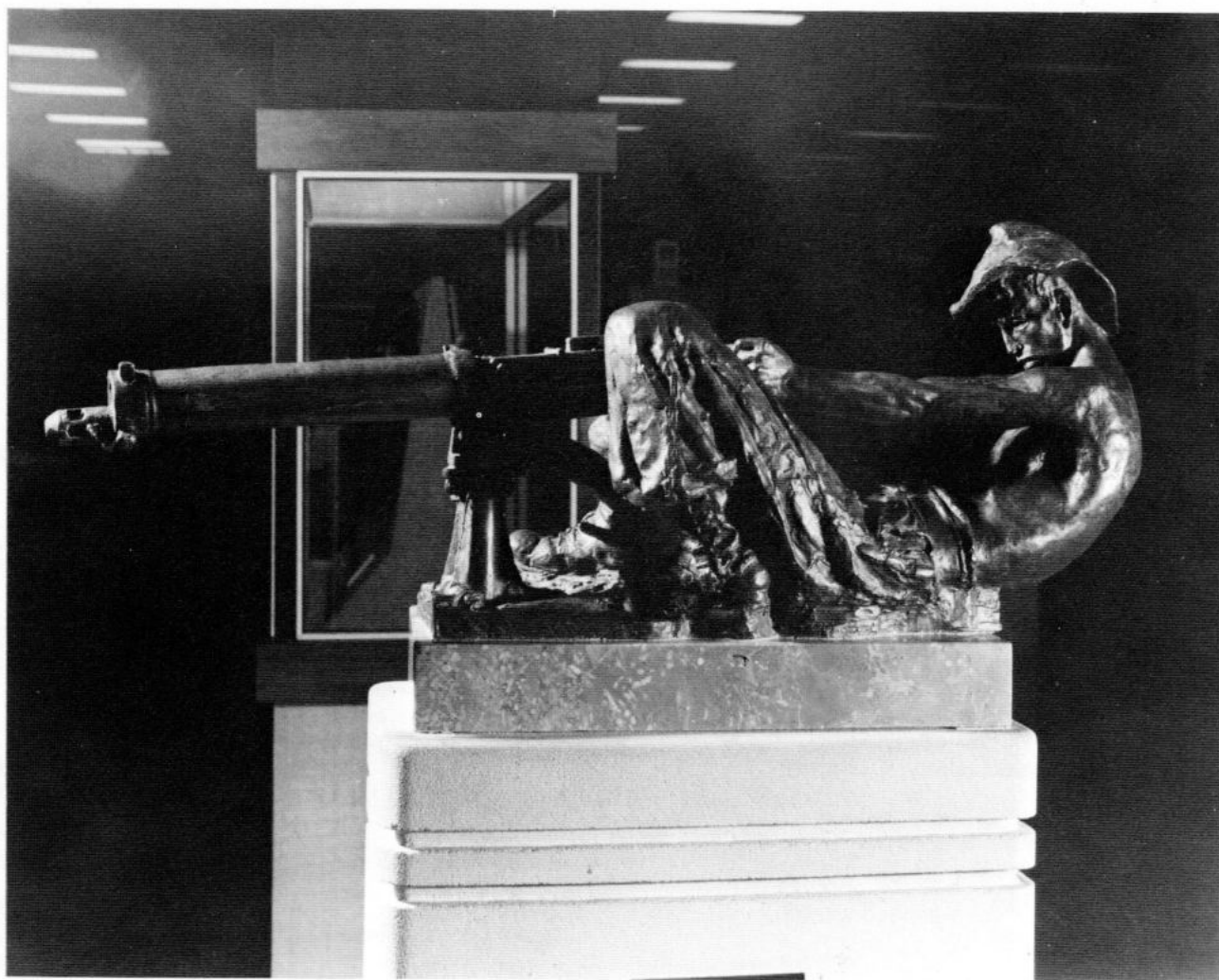


Fig. 5 Eroticism can be found in the most unlikely places. This bronze by R. Ewers in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, was intended as an heroic representation of a machine-gunner. However, the blatant phallic symbolism of the piece is too obvious to be ignored.



## ARTISTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

### William Strutt (1825–1915)

*David's First Victory* (1868) (Page 21)  
Oil on canvas. 201.5 cm × 110.5 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

### Arthur Streeton (1867–1943)

*Pastoral* (1894) (Page 33)  
Oil on silky oak panel. 30.5 cm × 61 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

### Charles Conder (1868–1909)

*A Dream of Araby* (1899) (Page 22)  
Lithograph. 24.8 cm × 33 cm  
Dixson Galleries, Sydney.

### Sydney Long (1871–1955)

*Flamingoes* (c. 1902) (Page 23)  
Oil on canvas. 101.2 cm × 197.2 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

### Bertram MacKenna (1863–1931)

*Circe* (1893) (Page 24)  
Bronze. 207 cm height  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Felton Bequest 1910

*Circe* (Page 25)  
Detail of the base

### G. W. Lambert (1873–1930)

*The Gift* (c. 1909) (Page 26)  
Oil on canvas. 33 cm × 51 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

### Rayner Hoff (1894–1937)

*Faun and Nymph* (1924) (Page 28)  
Bronze. 26.7 cm × 28.6 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

### L. Bernard Hall (1859–1935)

*A Colour Medley* (c. 1925) (Page 34)  
Oil on canvas. 43.2 cm × 56.2 cm  
Australian National Gallery, Canberra

*Sleep* (Page 27)  
Oil on canvas. 64 cm × 141 cm  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Felton Bequest 1919

### Norman Lindsay (1879–1969)

*Untitled* (1942) (Page 32)  
Wash drawing. 35 cm × 37 cm  
Private Collection

*Have Faith* (c. 1935) (Page 30)  
Etching (artist's proof). 28 cm × 25.2 cm

*Robin Hood* (Page 31)  
Etching. 25 cm × 21 cm  
(Illustration for *Idyllia*, by H. McCrae, 1922)

*My Devil for Yours* (1933) (Page 35)  
Watercolour. 47 cm × 38 cm  
Private Collection

*Bedroom Scene* (c. 1909) (Page 37)  
Etching. 15.2 cm × 12.7 cm  
Joseph Brown Collection, Melbourne

*Homage to Sappho* (page decoration) (Page 38)  
Etching. 8 cm  
(Translated by Jack Lindsay, published 1928)

### Percy Spence (1868–1933)

*Three Graces* (c. 1930) (Page 39)  
Watercolour and gouache. 37 cm  
Collection: José L. Gutierrez

### Frank Lynch (1898–1967)

*Satyr* (1924) (Page 29)  
Bronze cast from the original plaster. 155 cm high  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

### Donald Friend (born 1915)

*Dog Lover* (c. 1975) (Page 36)  
Ink and colour wash. 36 cm × 25 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Snow Scene II* (c. 1975) (Page 41)  
Ink. 40 cm × 50 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Study* (c. 1975) (Page 41)  
Ink. 14.8 cm × 18.5 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Reclining Figures* (c. 1975) (Page 53)  
Ink and colour wash. 47 cm × 61.4 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Rest in the Valley* (c. 1975) (Page 72)  
Ink and colour wash. 28.5 cm × 30 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Sketch for Nude* (c. 1975) (Page 73)  
Ink. 15 cm × 30 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

### James Gleeson (born 1915)

*Aurora* (1976) (Page 47)  
Ink and collage. 69.3 cm × 51.4 cm

*Totem* (1976) (Page 48)  
Ink and collage. 76 cm × 57 cm



*Salut* (1976) (Page 54)  
Coloured inks and collage. 76 cm × 57 cm

*St Sebastian* (c. 1960) (Page 55)  
Oil on canvas. 127.4 cm × 68.6 cm  
Collection: the artist

**Paul Delprat (born 1942)**

*Nymph Awaiting Marquis* (1975) (Title page)  
Etching. 25.5 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Starry Lash* (1976) (Page 43)  
Etching with aquatint. 14.5 cm × 10 cm

*The Cavalier who could make Coyntes Talk* (1977) (Page 44)  
Etching with aquatint and drypoint. 30 cm × 45 cm

*The Four Wishes of St Martin* (1977) (Page 45)  
Etching with aquatint. 45 cm × 40 cm

*Bathroom Series II* (1975) (Page 46)  
Etching with aquatint. 29.5 cm × 30 cm

**Christopher Boock (born 1947)**

*Through a Glass Darkly* (1976) (Page 67)  
Gouache. Detail. Full size 32 cm × 53 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Peacock* (1975) (Page 78)  
Gouache. 29 cm × 21 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Toots Trots Out* (1976) (Page 79)  
Watercolour. 21 cm × 21 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Scroll* (1976) (Page 80)  
Gouache and gold leaf. Detail. Full size 19 cm × 74 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

**Roy Lewis (born in Wales 1933. Working in Australia from 1966)**

*Cockring with Silver Balls and Executive Toy Horn with Amber Balls* (1976) (Page 75)  
5.7 cm (outside) and 12.7 cm (length)  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

**Brett Whiteley (born 1939)**

*Erotica* (1971) (Page 49)  
Ink. 101 cm × 70 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Two Erotic Drawings* (1976) (Page 50)  
Ink. 25 cm × 30 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*One Page of a Love Letter* (1971) (Page 56)  
Ink with colour insets. 64 cm × 48 cm  
Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*The Alchemy* (1973) (Cover &  
Mixed media mural on hardboard panels: Page 57)  
each panel 203 cm × 30 cm  
Collection: Mr R. C. Packer

**Arthur Boyd (born 1920)**

*Figure in a Landscape. Nude washing in a creek III* (1961) (Page 64)  
Oil and tempera on hardboard. 159.3 cm × 183 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

**Mike Brown (born 1938)**

*The Beautiful One is Here* (1969–70) (Page 59)  
Collage on hardboard. 121.5 cm × 121.5 cm  
Art Gallery of N.S.W.

*Mary Lou as Miss Universe* (1966) (Page 63)  
Sculptural assemblage on hardboard. 183 cm × 137 cm

(This is the second version of a work first exhibited with the Imitation Realists in Sydney in 1962. It has now been dismantled by the artist)

**Martin Sharp (born 1942)**

*Don't Leave Me Here Standing All Alone* (1969) (Page 51)  
Screen print. 100 cm × 82 cm  
Collection: Daniel Thomas

**Thomas Arthur (born U.S.A. 1946. Working in Australia from 1974)**

*Birth of Brahma Disney* (1974–5) (Page 65)  
Detail. Pencil and wash. Full size 45 cm × 61 cm  
Collection: the artist

*Untitled* (1976) (Page 77)  
Assemblage with photograph, protea petal and resin-impregnated fish. 28 cm × 23.5 cm  
Collection: the artist

**David McDiarmid (born 1952)**

*Secret Love* (1973) (Page 62)  
Collage with gold paint and coloured inks on graph paper. 62 cm × 49.5 cm  
Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**John Armstrong (born 1948)**

*The Cage* (1976) (Page 52)  
Porcelain insulator, fur, and bird cage. 16 cm high  
Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**Ken Reinhard (born 1936)**

*Body Stripe* (1970) (Page 61)  
Screen print. 67.5 cm × 51 cm  
Hogarth Galleries, Sydney



**Richard Zalbudek (born in Czechoslovakia 1948. Working in Australia from 1968)**

*Erotic Experience III* (1976) (Page 58)

Mixed media. 60 cm × 21 cm

Holdsworth Galleries, Sydney

*Return to Nature* (1976) (Page 60)

Oil on canvas. 122 cm × 122 cm

Collection: the artist

**George Schwarz (born in Switzerland 1935. Working in Australia from 1969)**

*Il Spino* (1976) (Page 66)

Colour photograph

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**Mary Ann Haswell (born 1942)**

*Queen of the Nile* (1976) (Page 40)

Colour photograph

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**Charis E. Schwarz (born 1939)**

*Virgin Dream* (1976) (Page 68)

Pen drawing. 26 cm × 21 cm

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

*Self Portrait* (1976) (Page 69)

Cyanotype and gouache. 43 cm × 33 cm

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**Alan Oldfield (born 1943)**

*Two Men* (1974) (detail) (Page 71)

Pen. 44 cm × 66 cm

Private collection

**Francis Lymburner (1916–1972)**

*The Chemise* (1945) (Back cover)

Pen. 38 cm high

Private collection

**Murray Walker (born 1937)**

*The Two Grinning Cleopatras* (1973) (Page 76)

Etching. 20 cm × 17.5 cm

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**Petr Herel (born Czechoslovakia 1943. Working in Australia from 1973–6. Now resident in France)**

*Memento Mori III* (1968) (Page 70)

Etching. 26 cm × 23.2 cm

Macquarie Galleries, Sydney

**Gary Shead (born 1942)**

*Encounter II* (1977) (Page 74)

Pen and wash. 26.5 cm × 35 cm

Hogarth Galleries, Sydney

**Charles Blackman (born 1928)**

*The Embrace* (1969) (Page 42)

Screen print. 41.5 cm × 52 cm

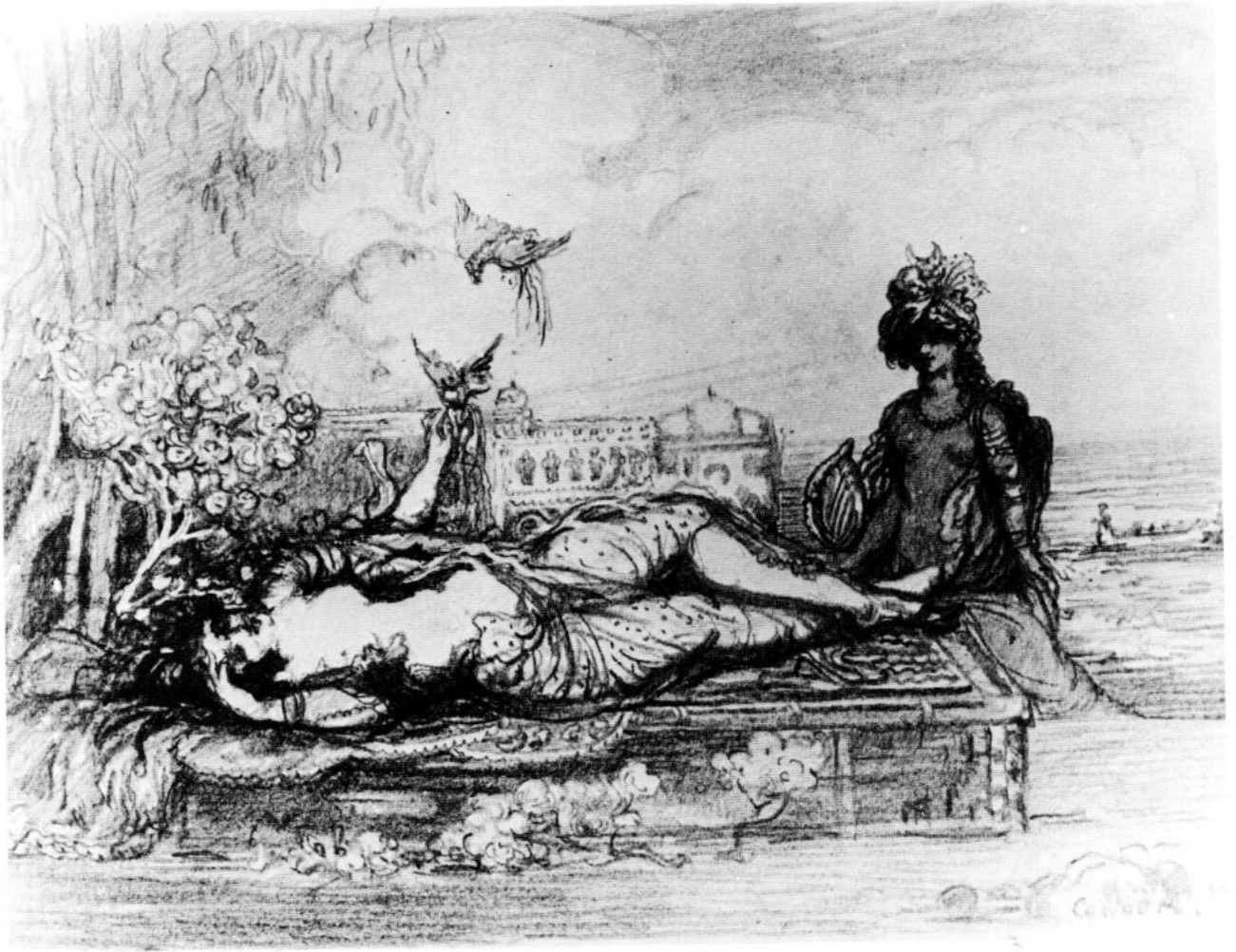
Hogarth Galleries, Sydney





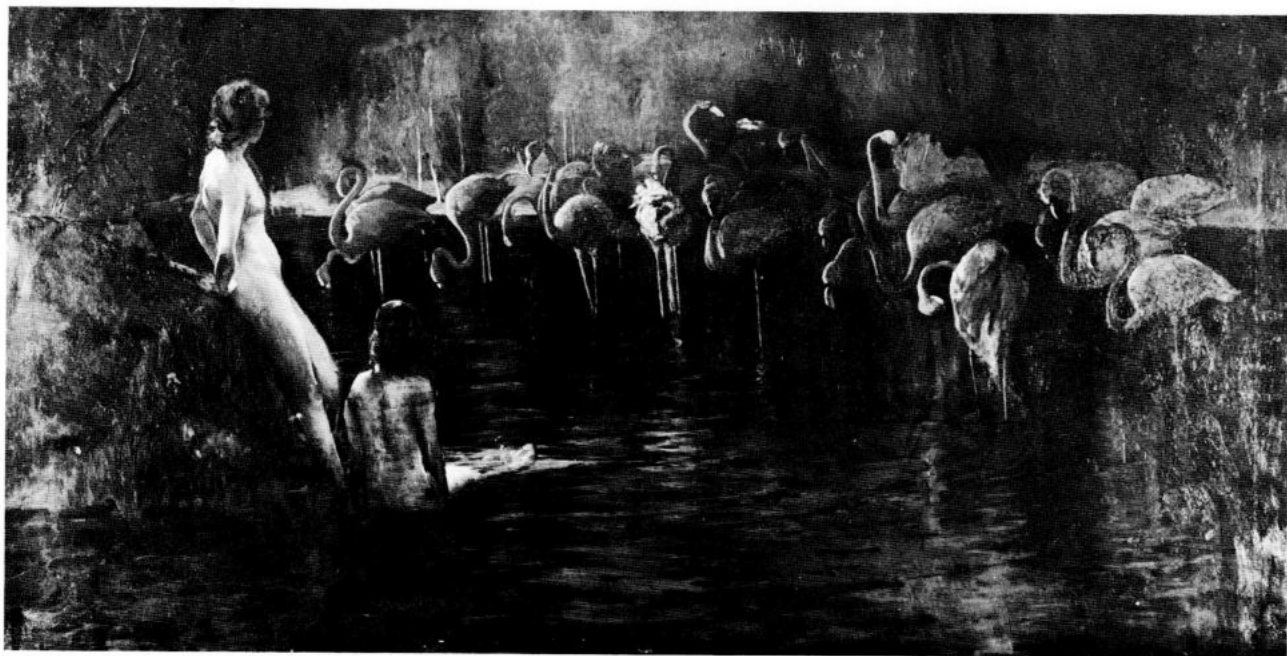
**David's First Victory (1868)**  
William Strutt



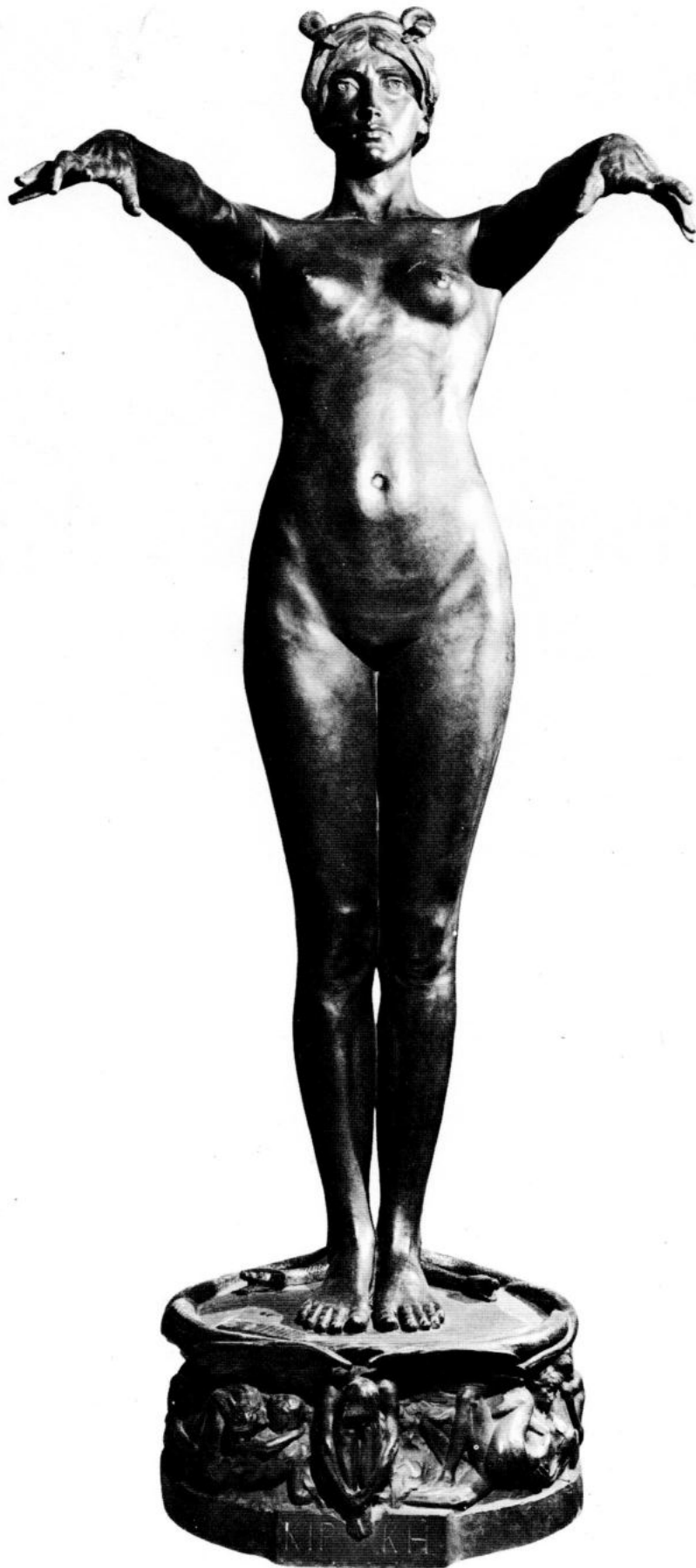


**A Dream of Araby (1899)**  
Charles Conder





**Flamingoes (c. 1902)**  
Sydney Long

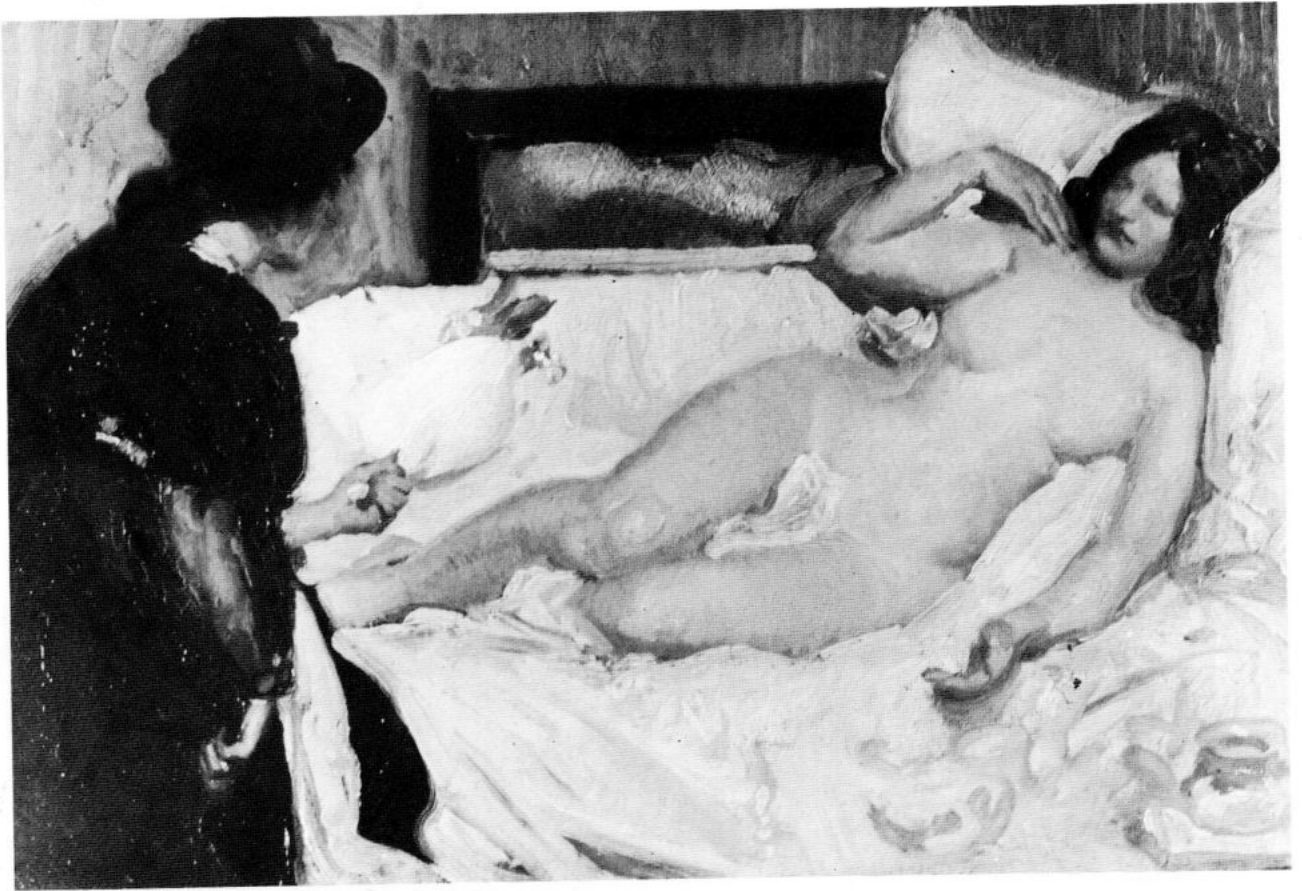


**Circe (1893)**  
Bertram MacKinnell



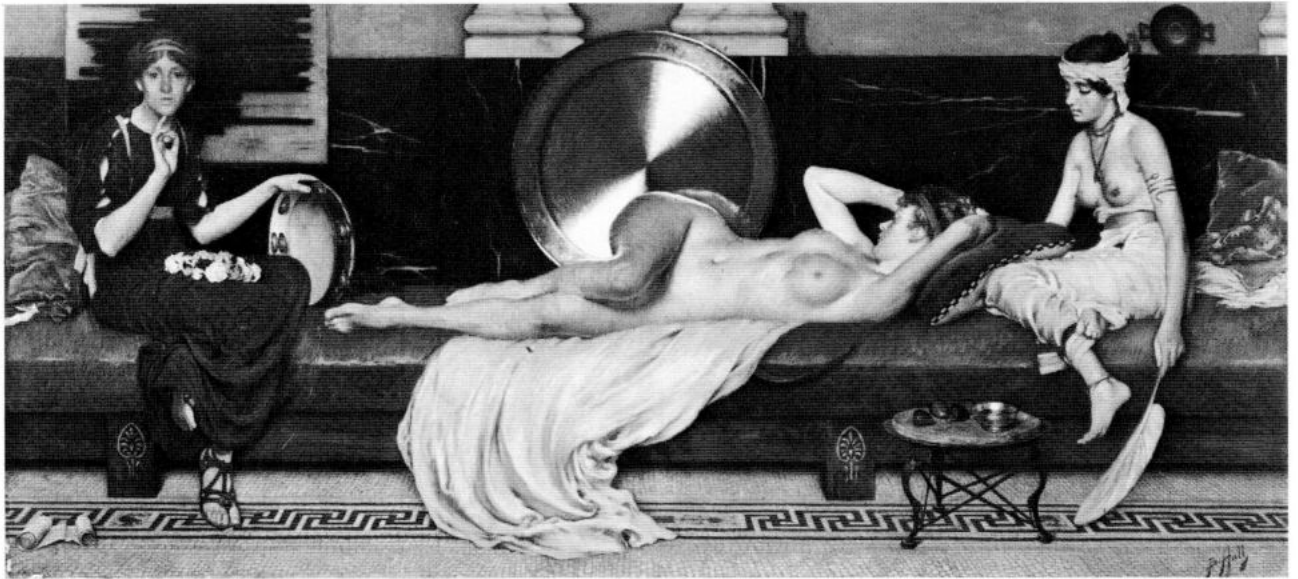


**Circe.** *Detail of the base that was considered too  
lewd for London*  
Bertram MacKennal



**The Gift (c. 1909)**  
G. W. Lambert



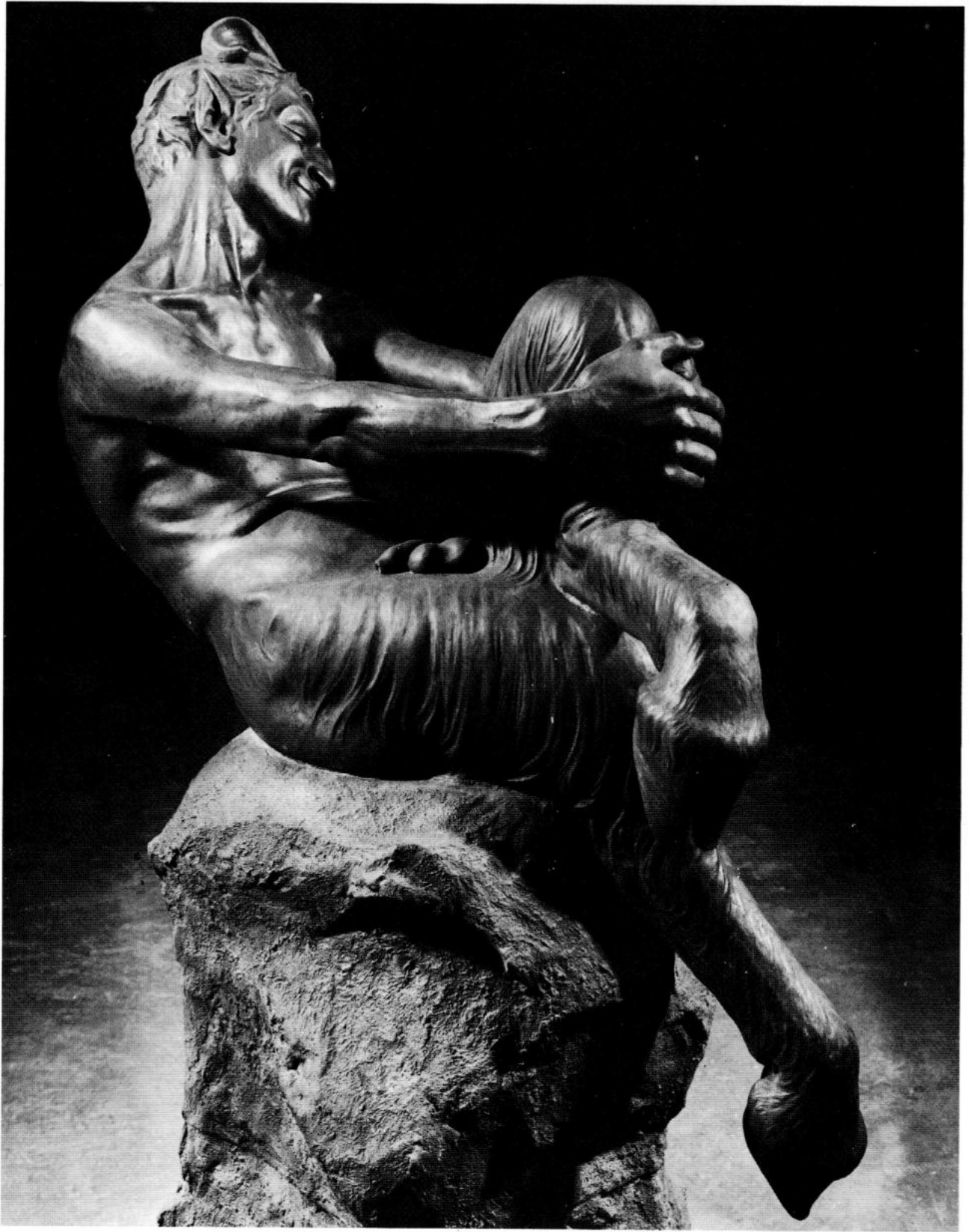


**Sleep**  
Bernard Hall



**Faun and Nymph (1924)**  
Rayner Hoff





Satyr (1924)  
Frank Lynch

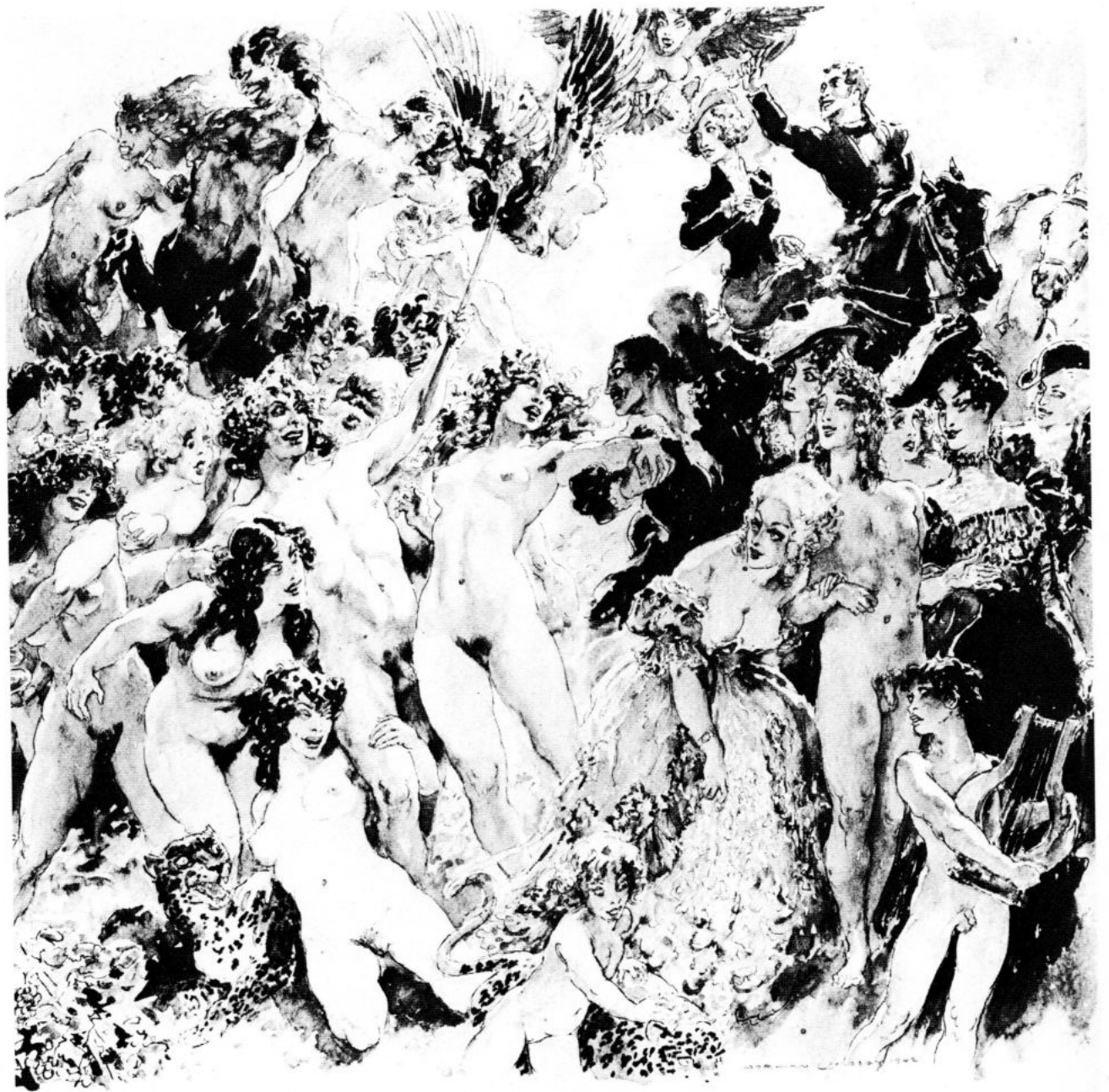


**Have Faith (c. 1935)**  
Norman Lindsay





**Robin Hood (1922)**  
Etching by Norman Lindsay

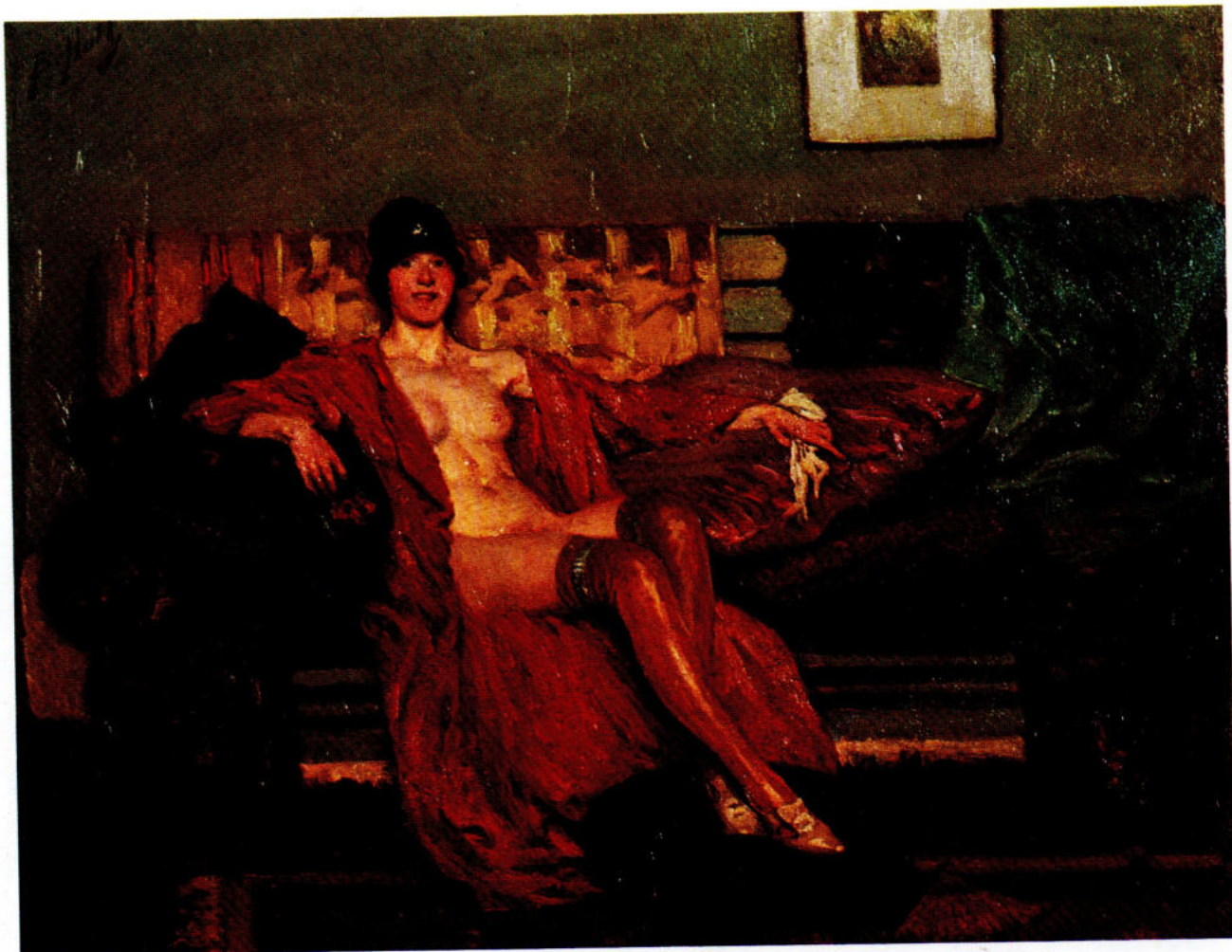


Untitled (1942)  
Norman Lindsay



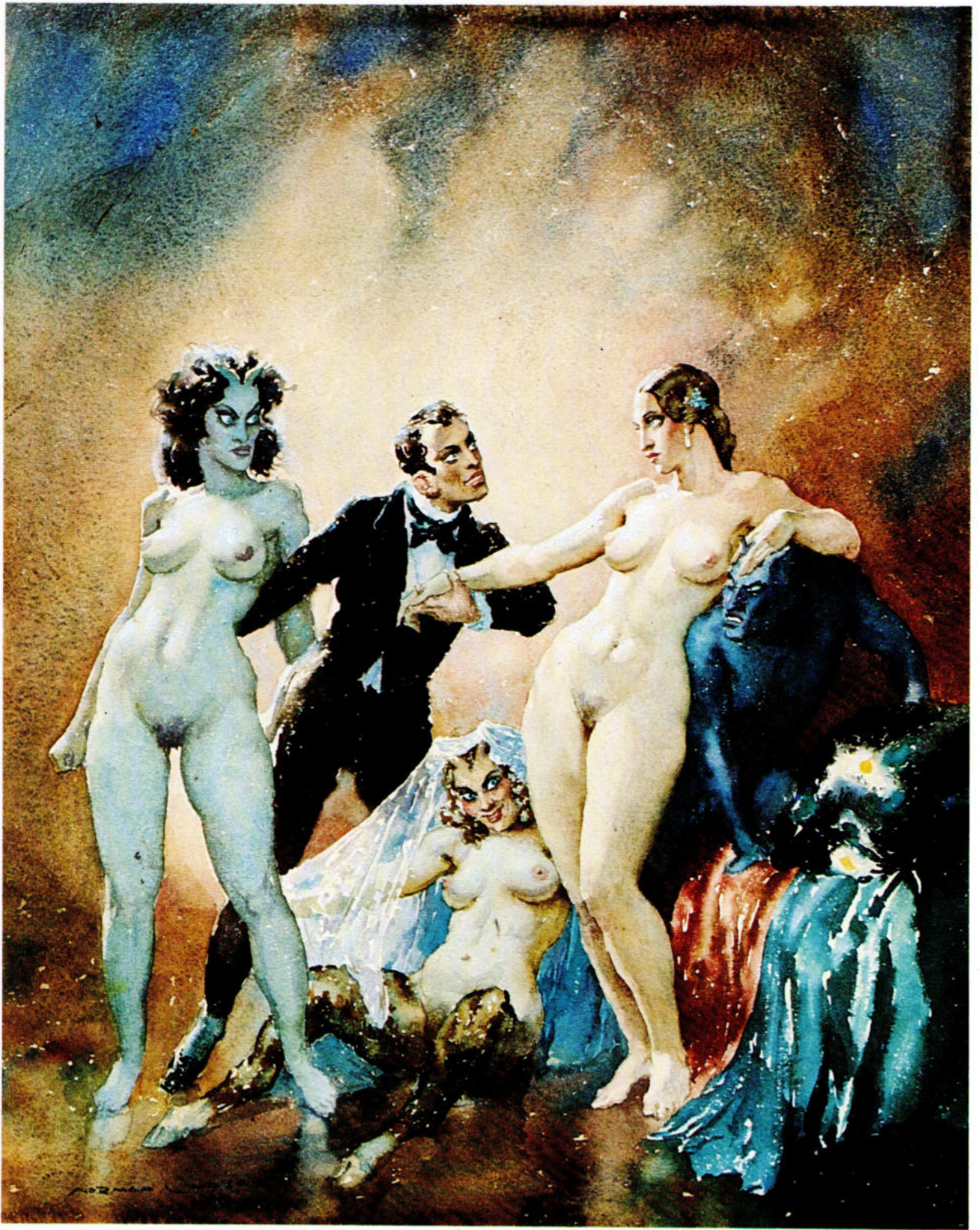


**Pastoral (1894)**  
Arthur Streeton



**A Colour Medley (c. 1925)**  
L. Bernard Hall





**My Devil for Yours (1933)**  
Norman Lindsay





**Dog Lover (c. 1975)**  
Donald Friend





**Bedroom Scene (c. 1909)**  
Etching by Norman Lindsay



**'Homage to Sappho'** (published 1928) (*page  
decoration*)  
Norman Lindsay



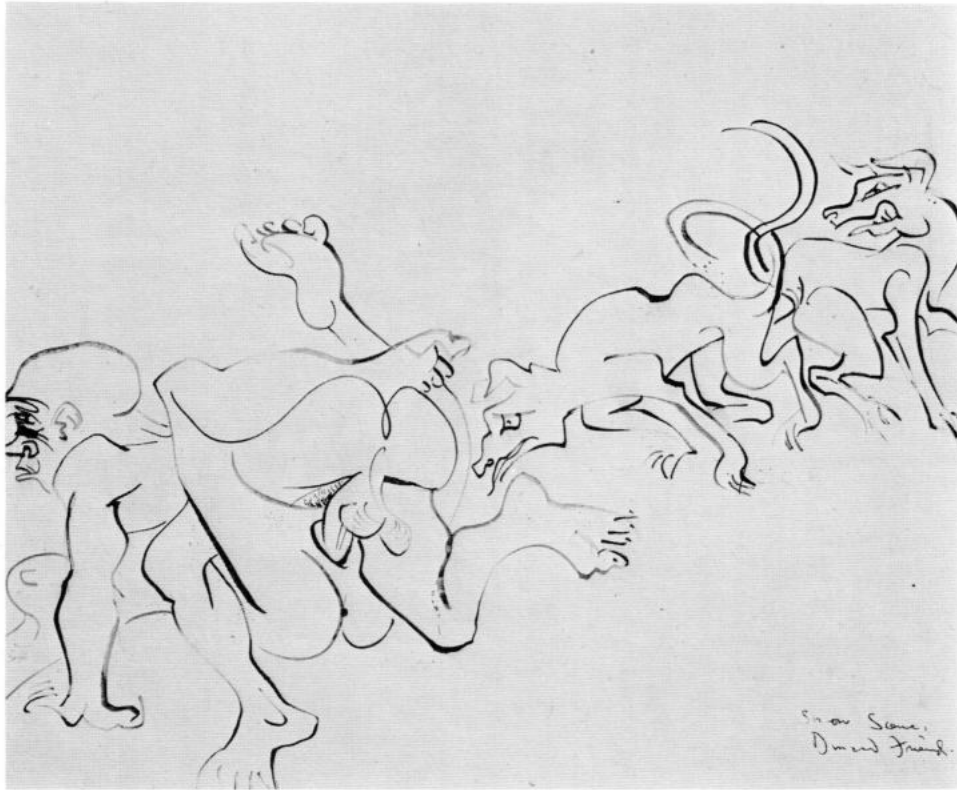


**Three Graces (c. 1930)**  
Percy Spence



**Queen of the Nile (1976)**  
Mary Ann Haswell



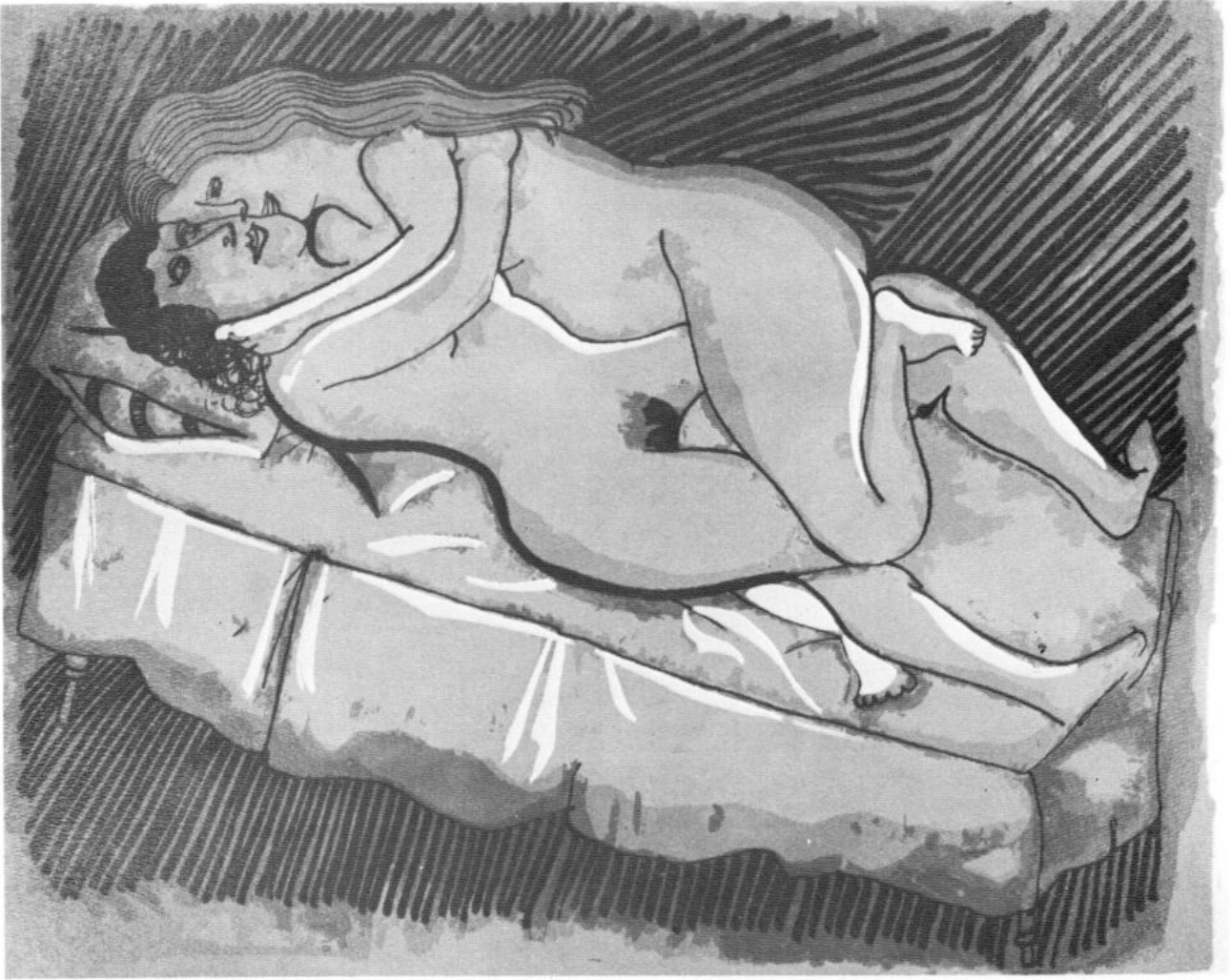


**Snow Scene II (c. 1975)**

Donald Friend

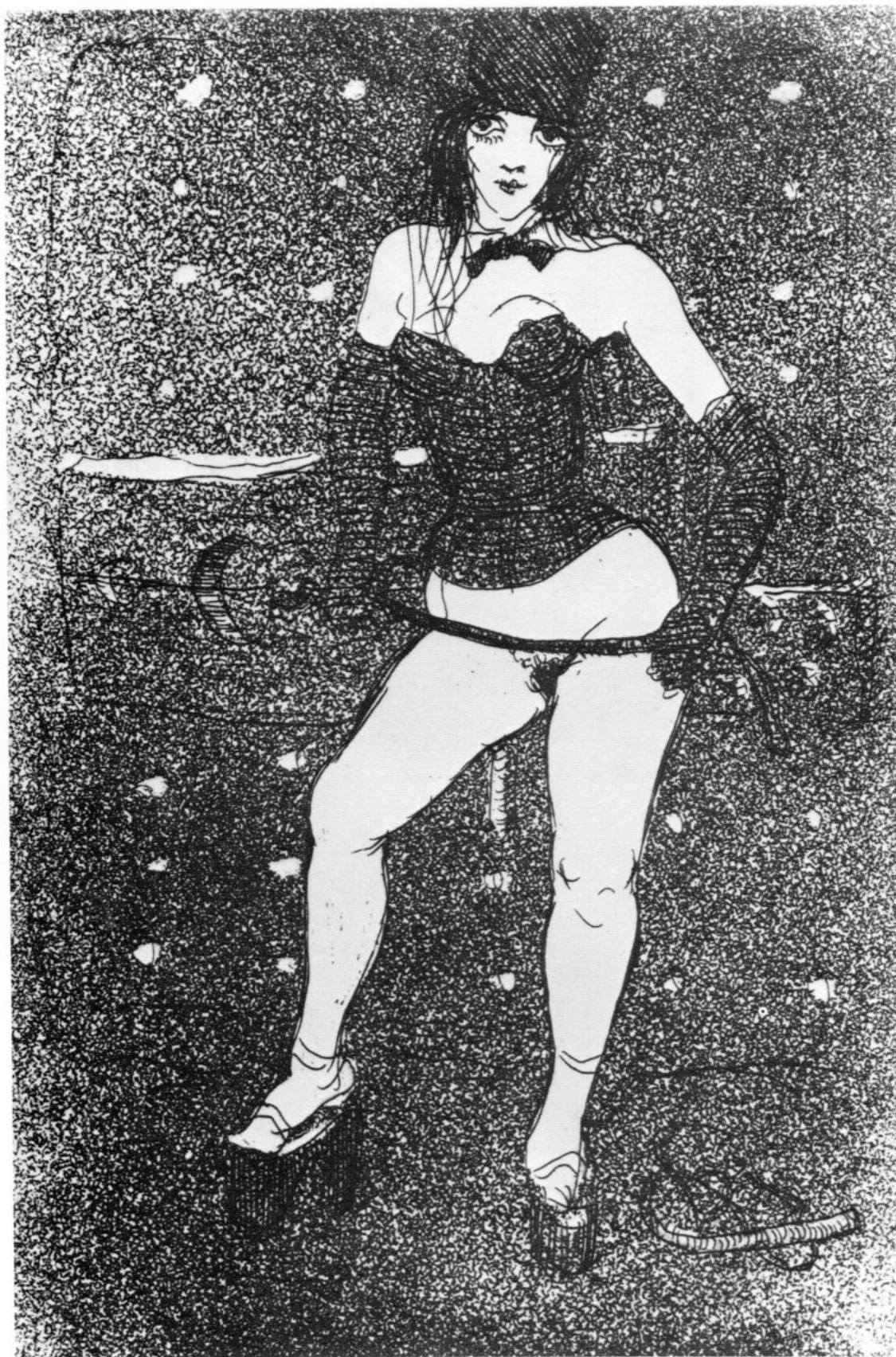
**Study (c. 1975)**

Donald Friend



**The Embrace (1969)**  
Charles Blackman





**Starry Lash (1976)**  
Paul Delprat



**The Cavalier Who Could Make Coyntes Talk (1977)**  
Paul Delprat



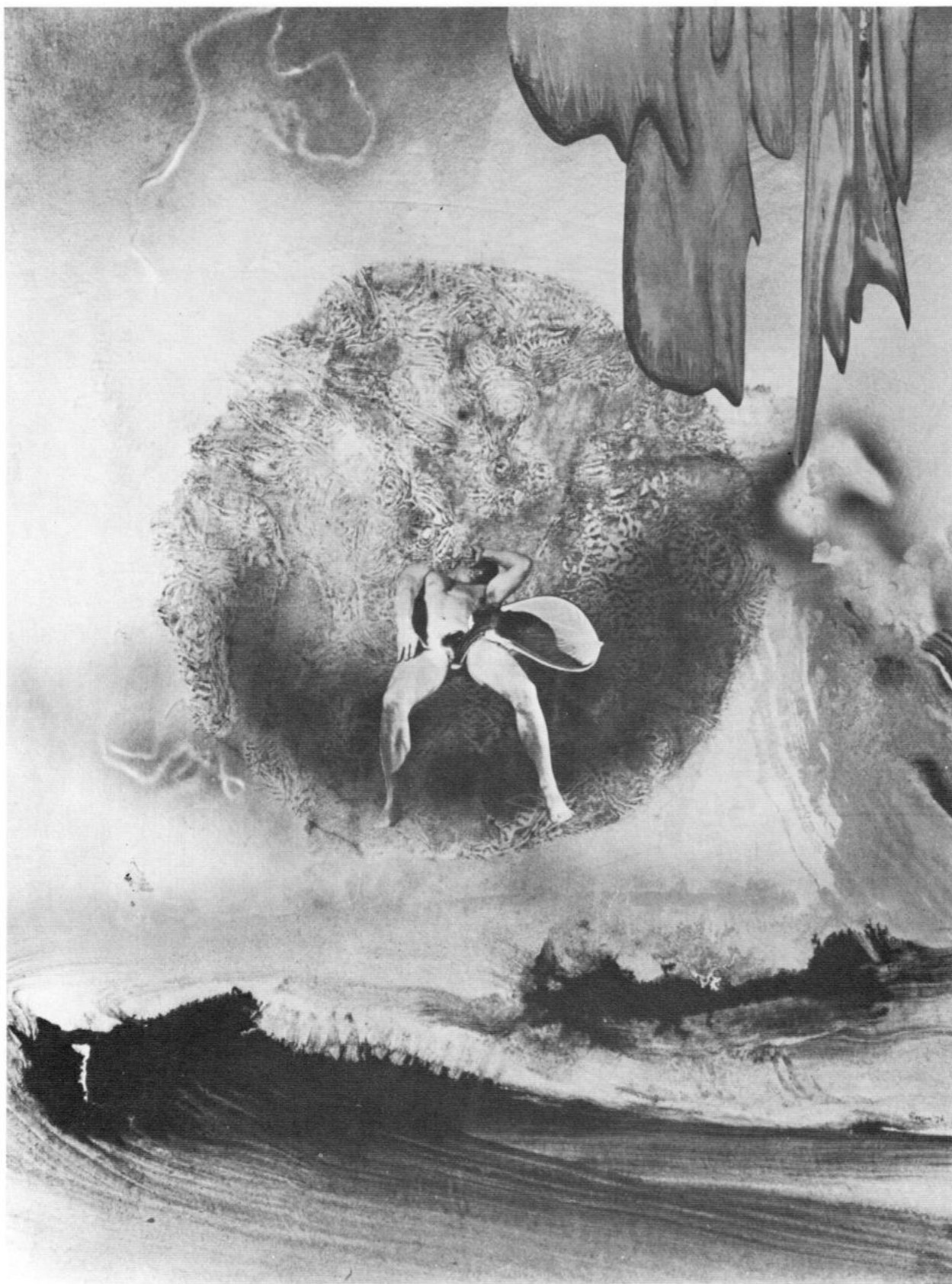


**The Four Wishes of St Martin (1977)**  
Paul Delprat



**Bathroom Series II (1975)**  
Paul Delprat



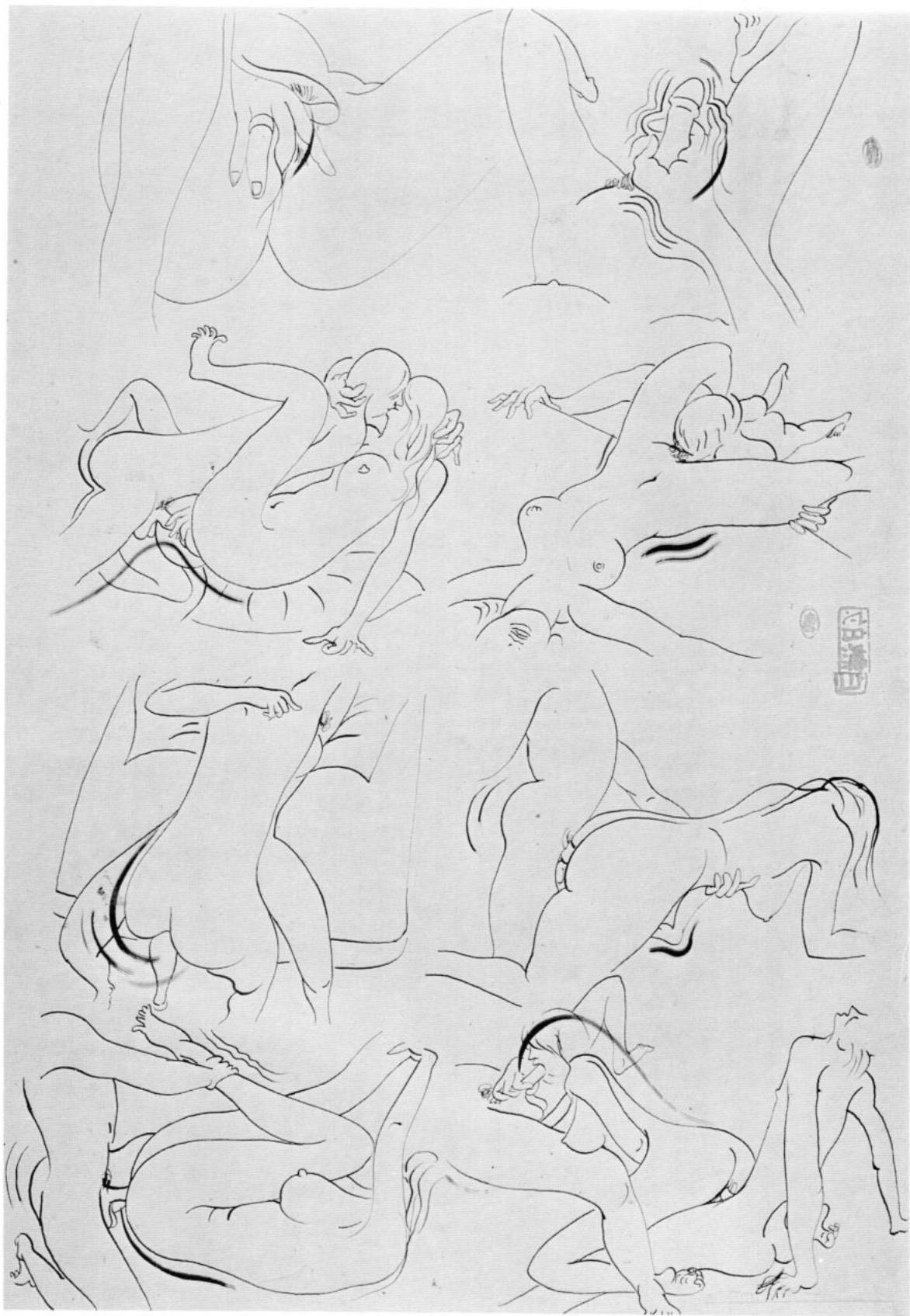


**Aurora (1976)**  
James Gleeson

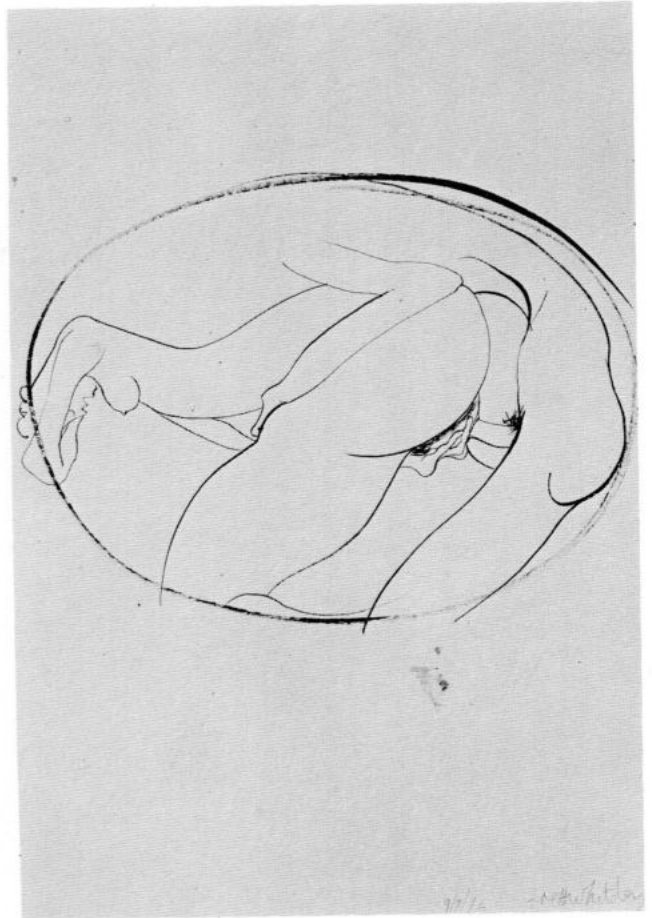


**Totem (1976)**  
James Gleeson



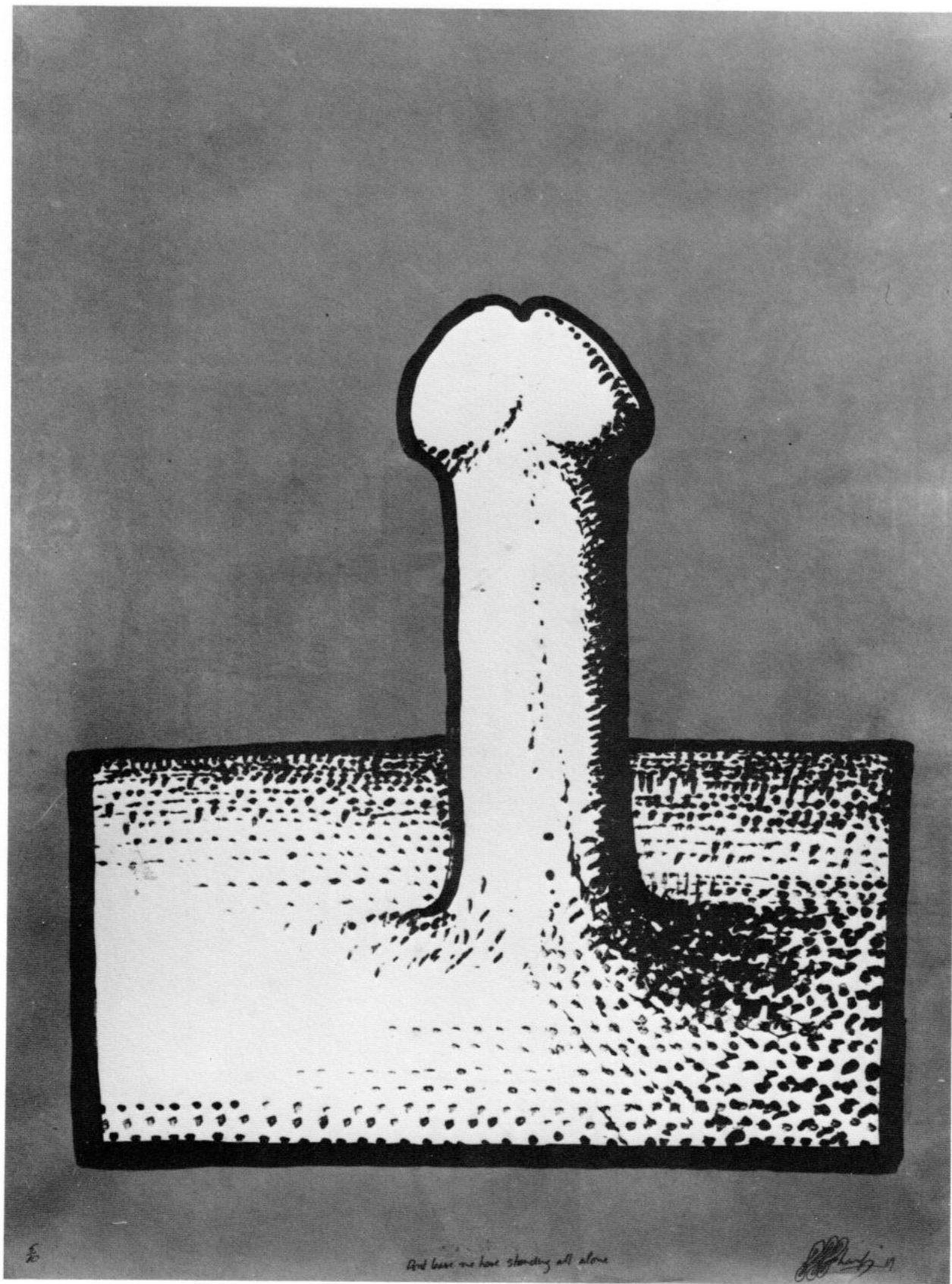


**Erotica (1971)**  
Brett Whiteley

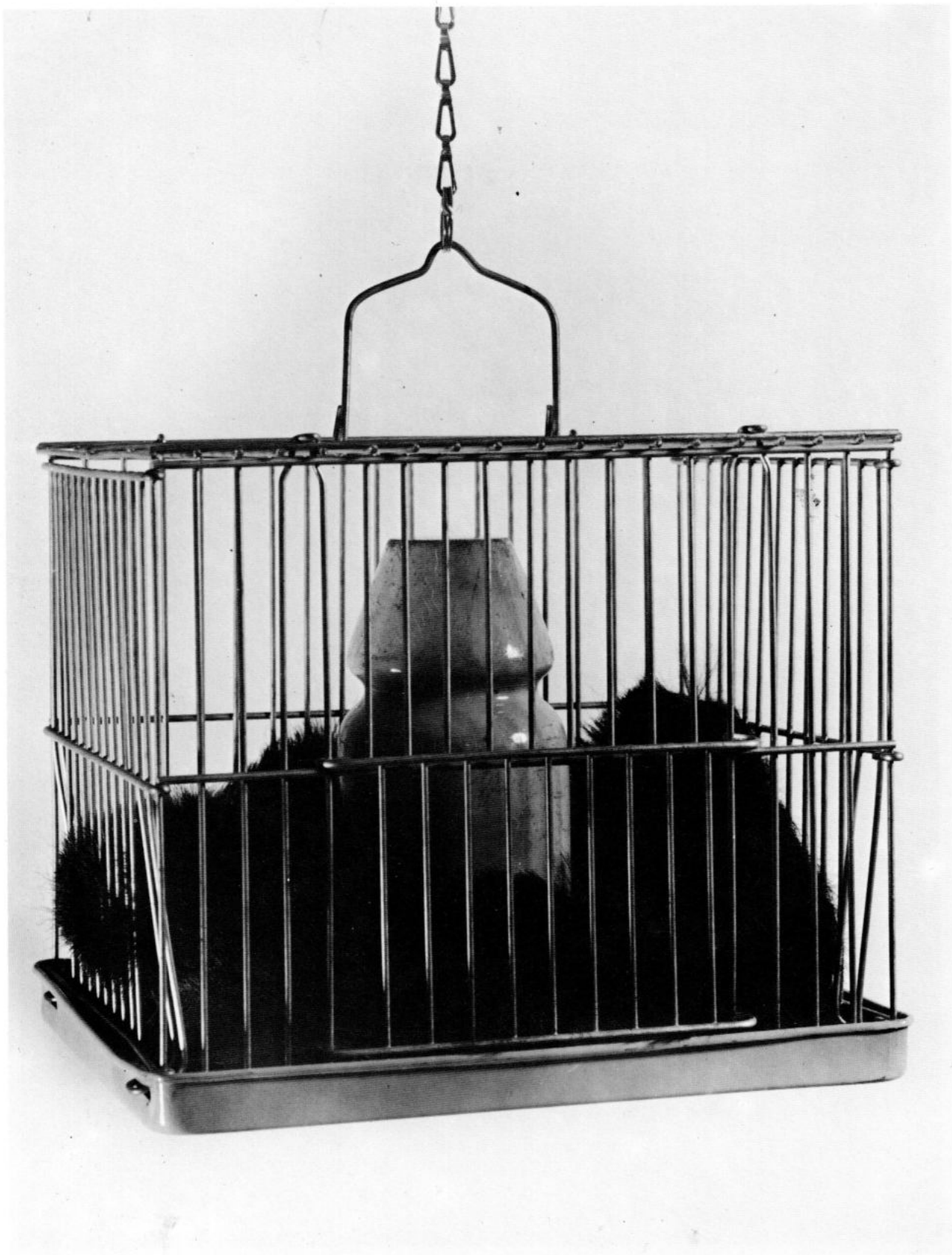


**Two Erotic Drawings (1976)**  
Brett Whiteley





**Don't Leave Me Here Standing All Alone (1969)**  
Martin Sharp



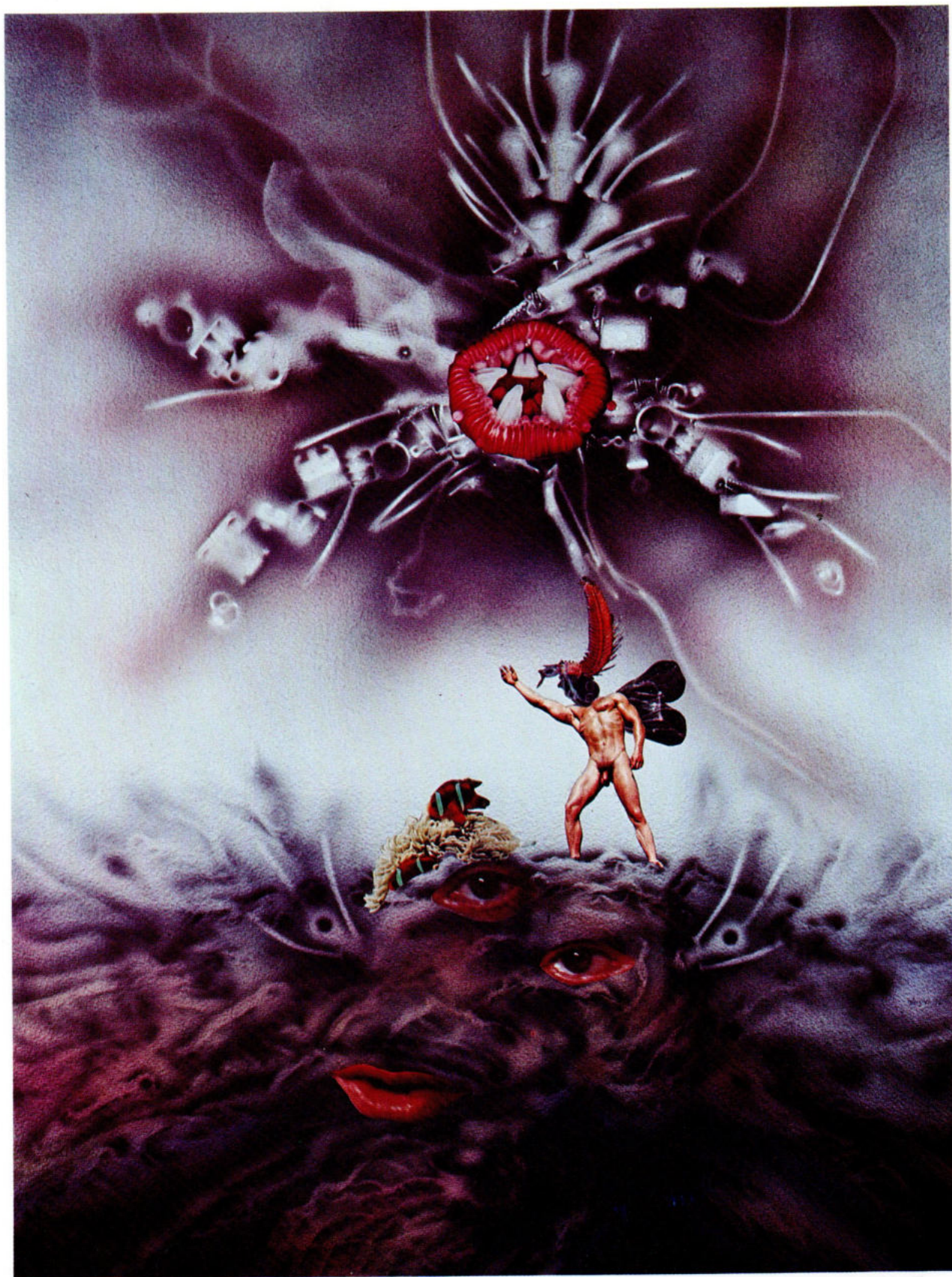
**The Cage (1976)**  
John Armstrong





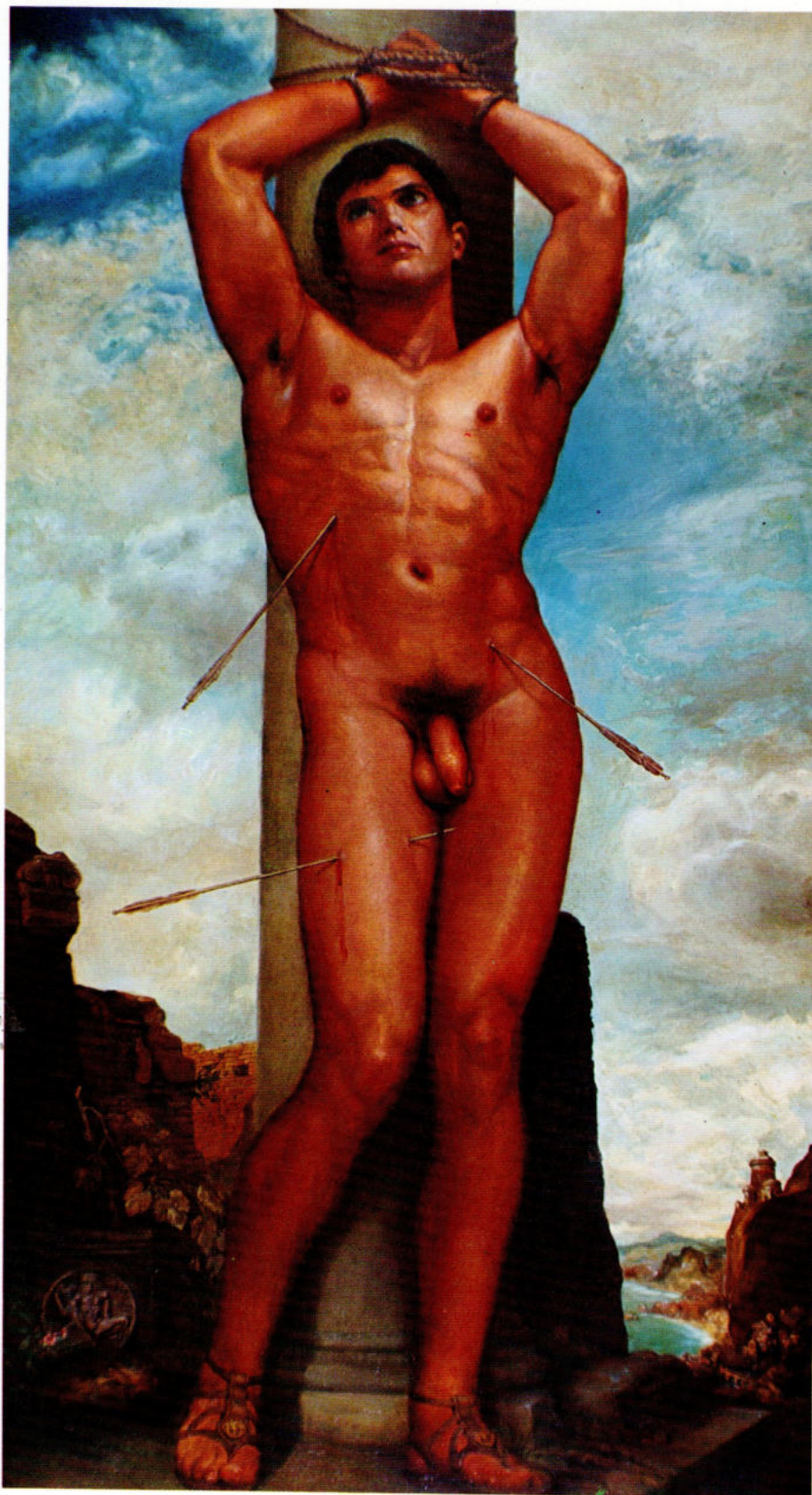
**Reclining Figures (c. 1975)**  
Donald Friend





Salut (1976)  
James Gleeson





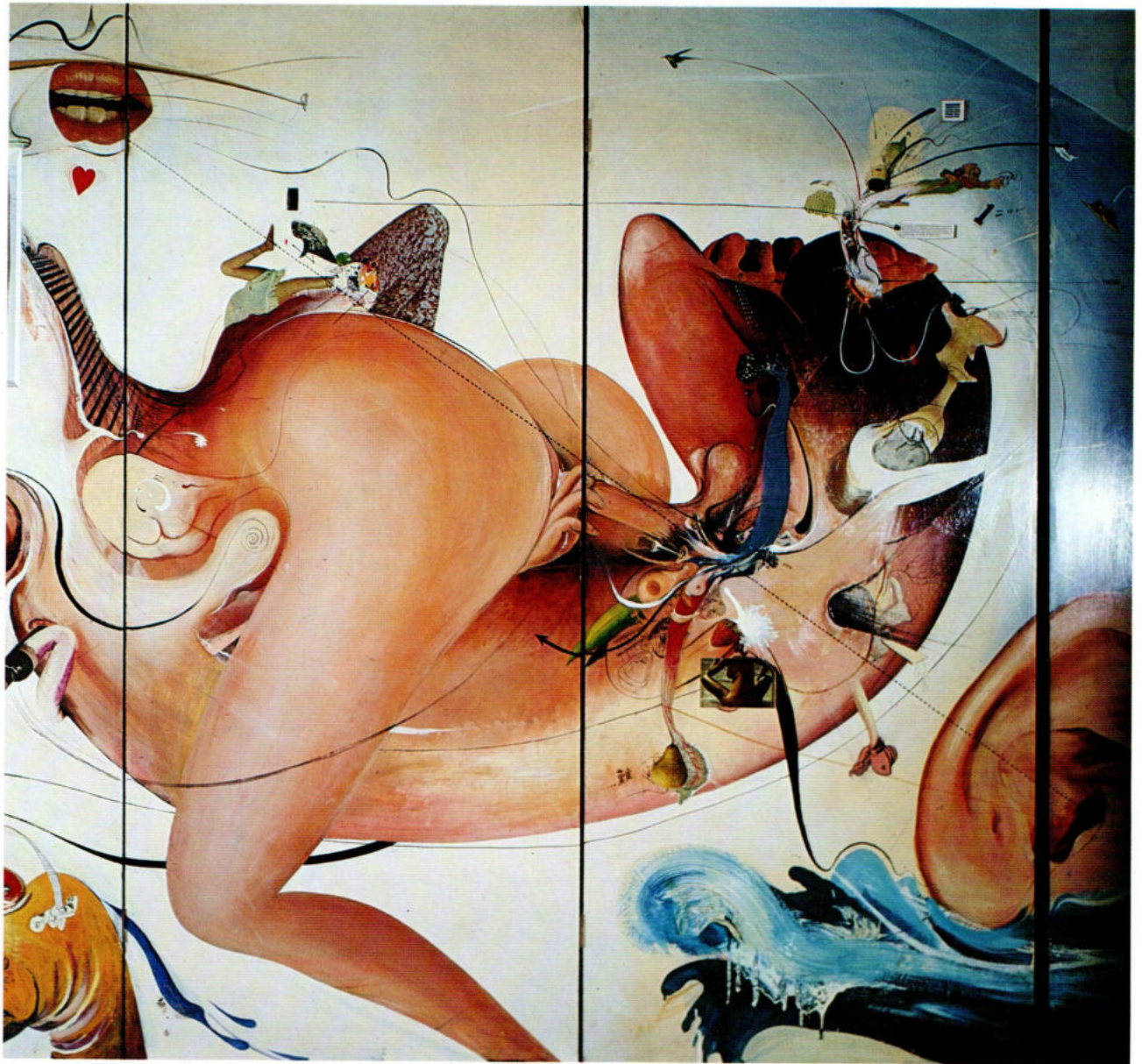
**St Sebastian (c. 1960)**  
James Gleeson





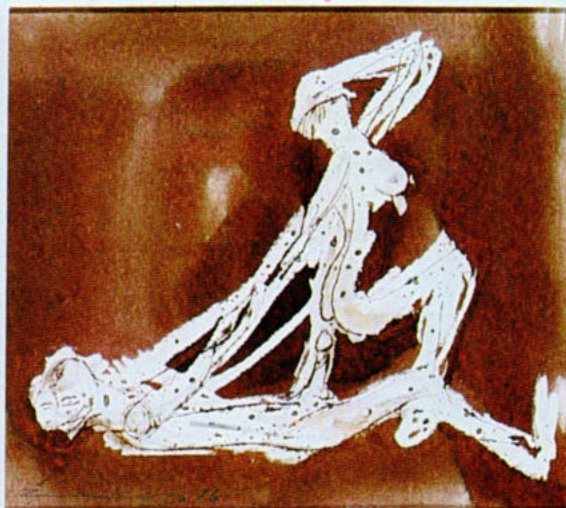
**One Page of a Love Letter (1971)**  
Brett Whiteley





**The Alchemy (1973).** *Detail of a mural*  
Brett Whiteley





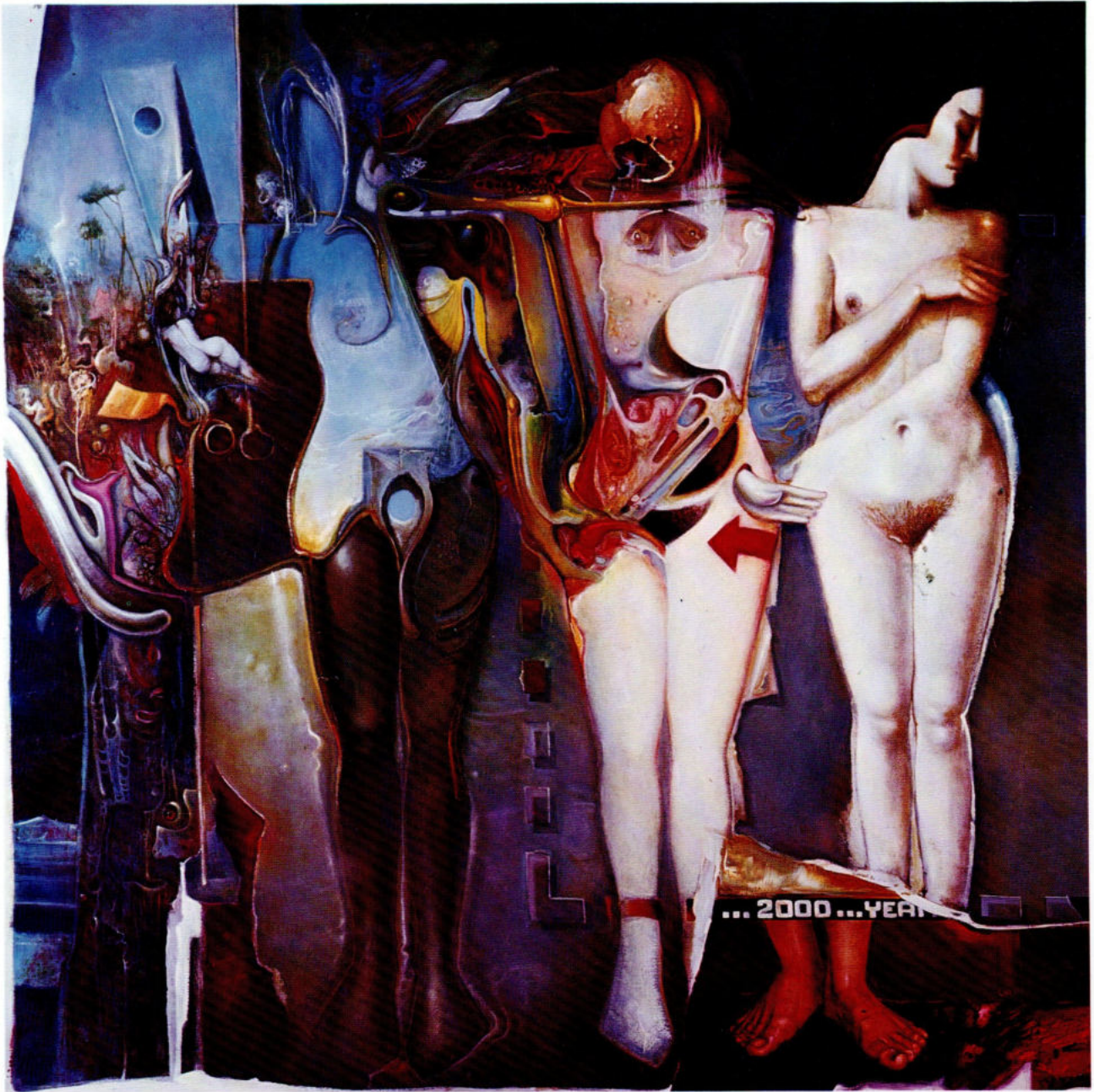
**Erotic Experience III (1976)**  
Richard Zalbudek





The Beautiful One Is Here (1969–70)  
Mike Brown





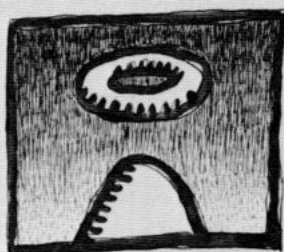
**Return to Nature (1976)**  
Richard Zalbudek





**Body Stripe (1970)**  
Ken Reinhard

# "secret love"



once I had a secret love,  
that lived within the heart in me,  
all too soon, my secret love  
became impatient - to be free

now I shout it from the highest hill  
even told the golden daffodil  
that now, my heart's on  
open door,

'cos my  
secret

SECRET LOVE'S

ANYMORE







Mary Lou as Miss Universe (1966). *Second version*  
Mike Brown

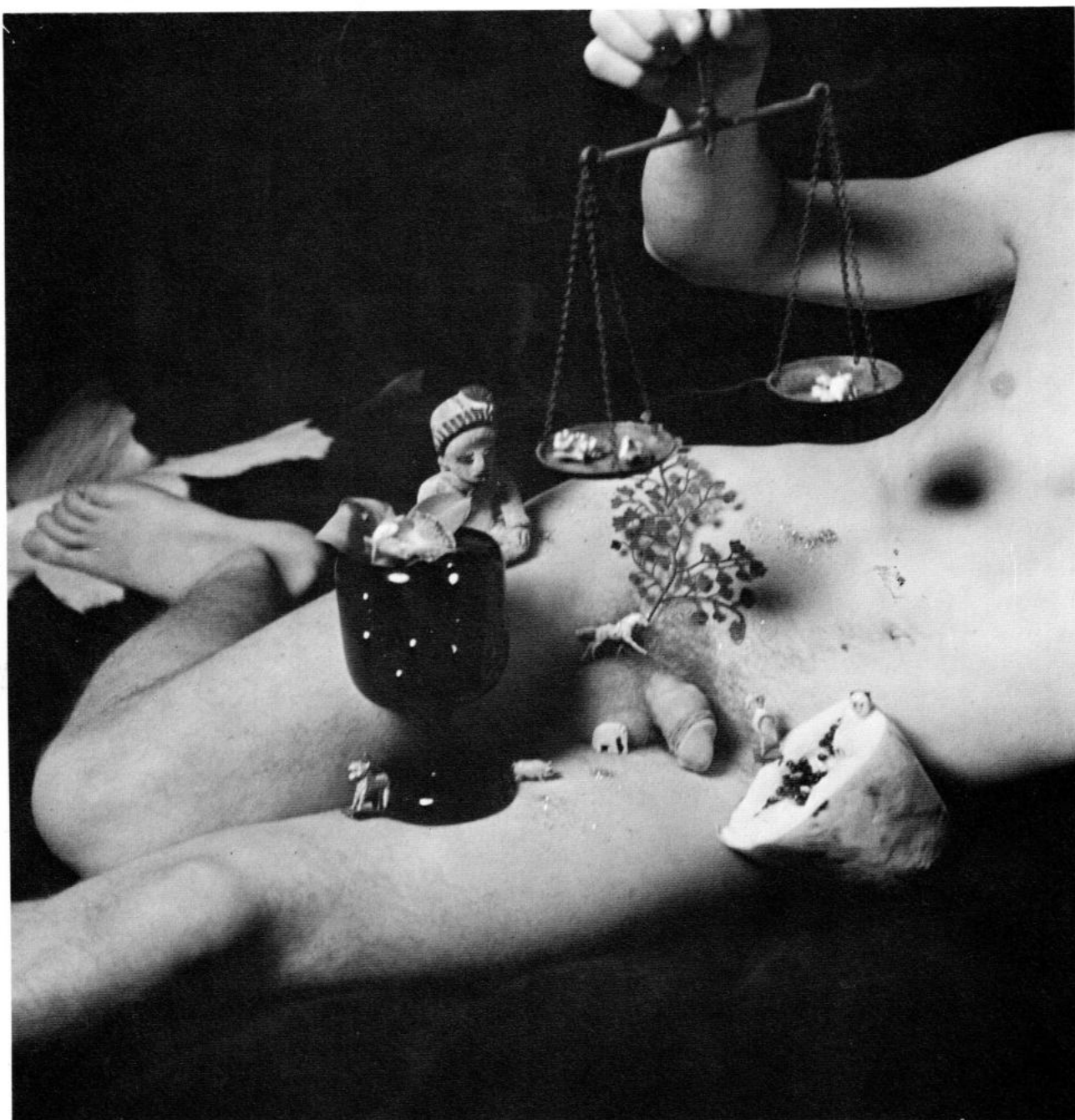


Figure in a Landscape, Nude washing in a creek III  
(1961)  
Arthur Boyd





**Birth of Brahma** Disney (1974–5). *Detail*  
Thomas Arthur

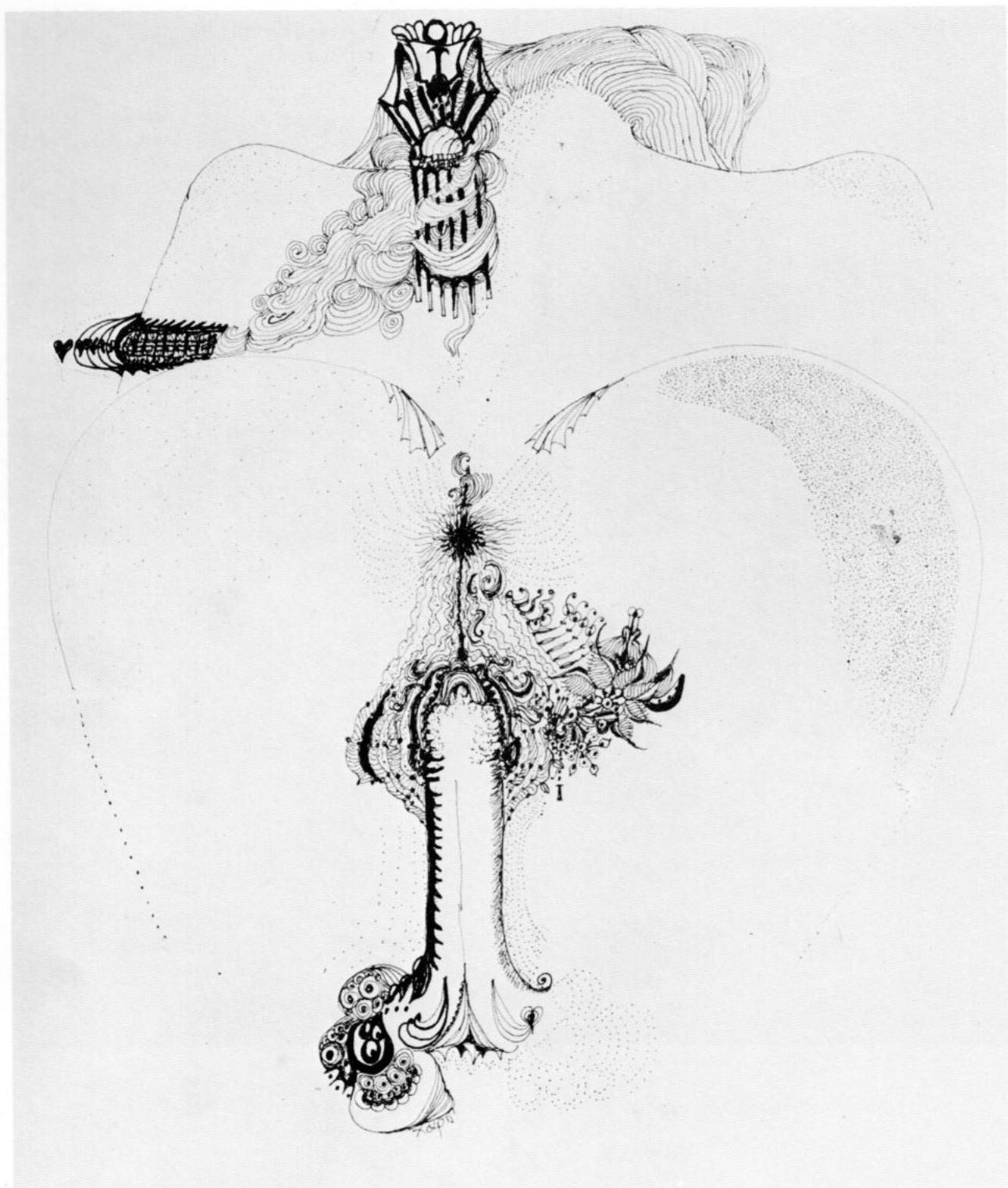


**Il Spino (1976)**  
George Schwarz





**Through a Glass Darkly (1976).** *Detail*  
Christopher Boock

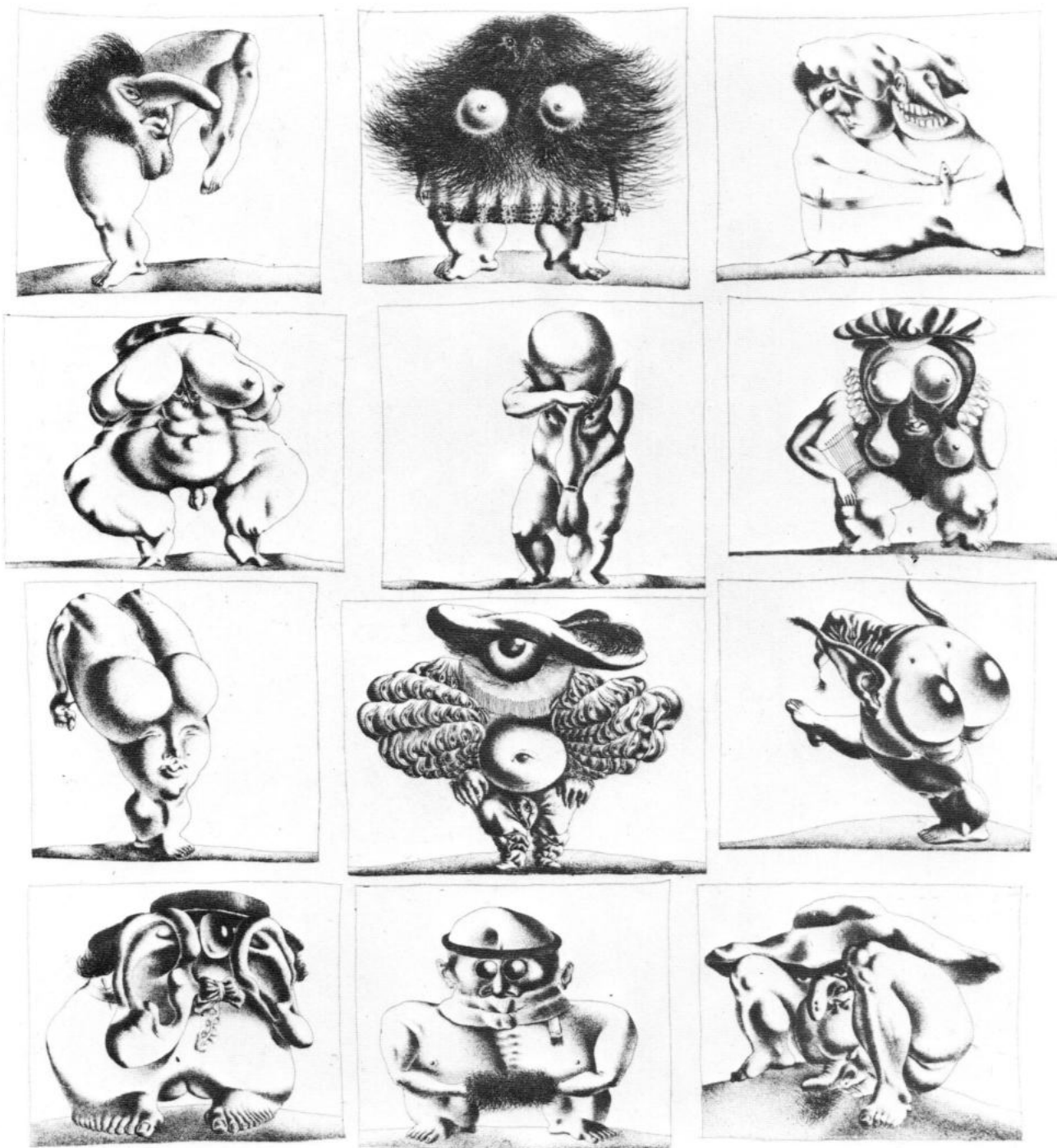


**Virgin Dream (1976)**  
Charis E. Schwarz





**Self Portrait (1976)**  
Charis E. Schwarz



Memento Mori III (1968)  
Petr Herel



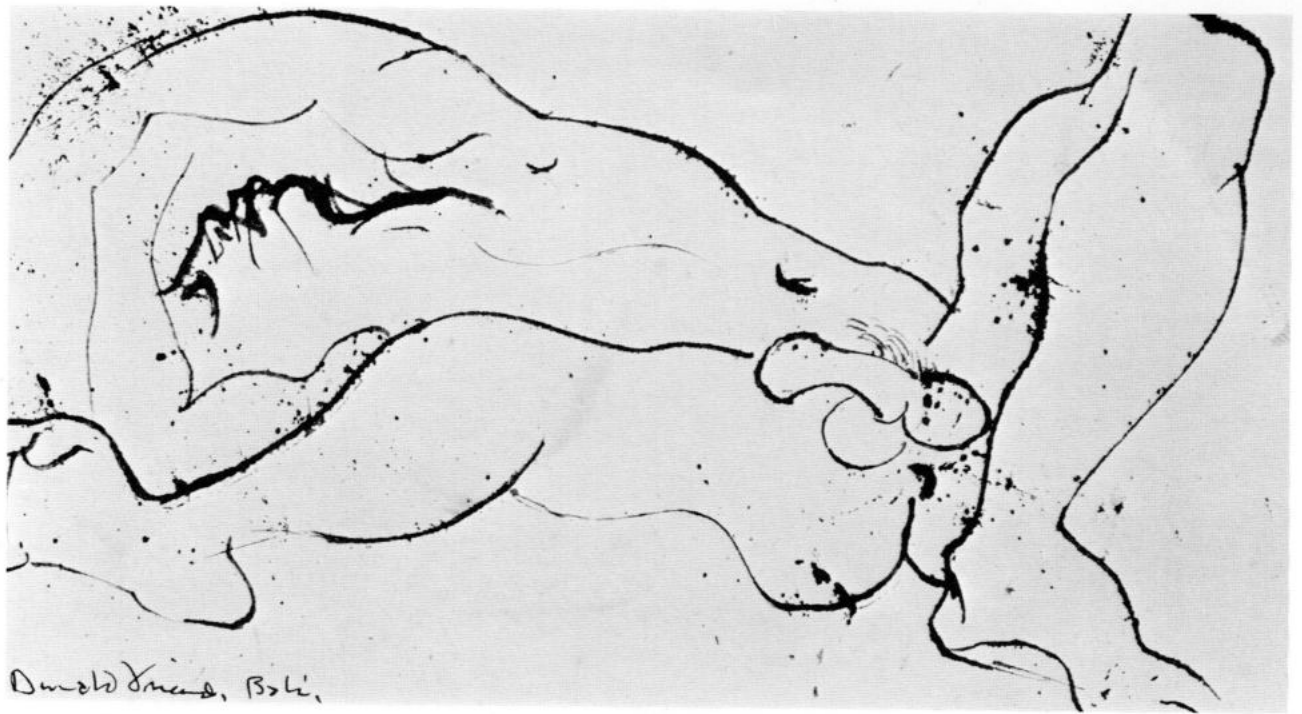


**Two Men (1974)**  
Alan Oldfield

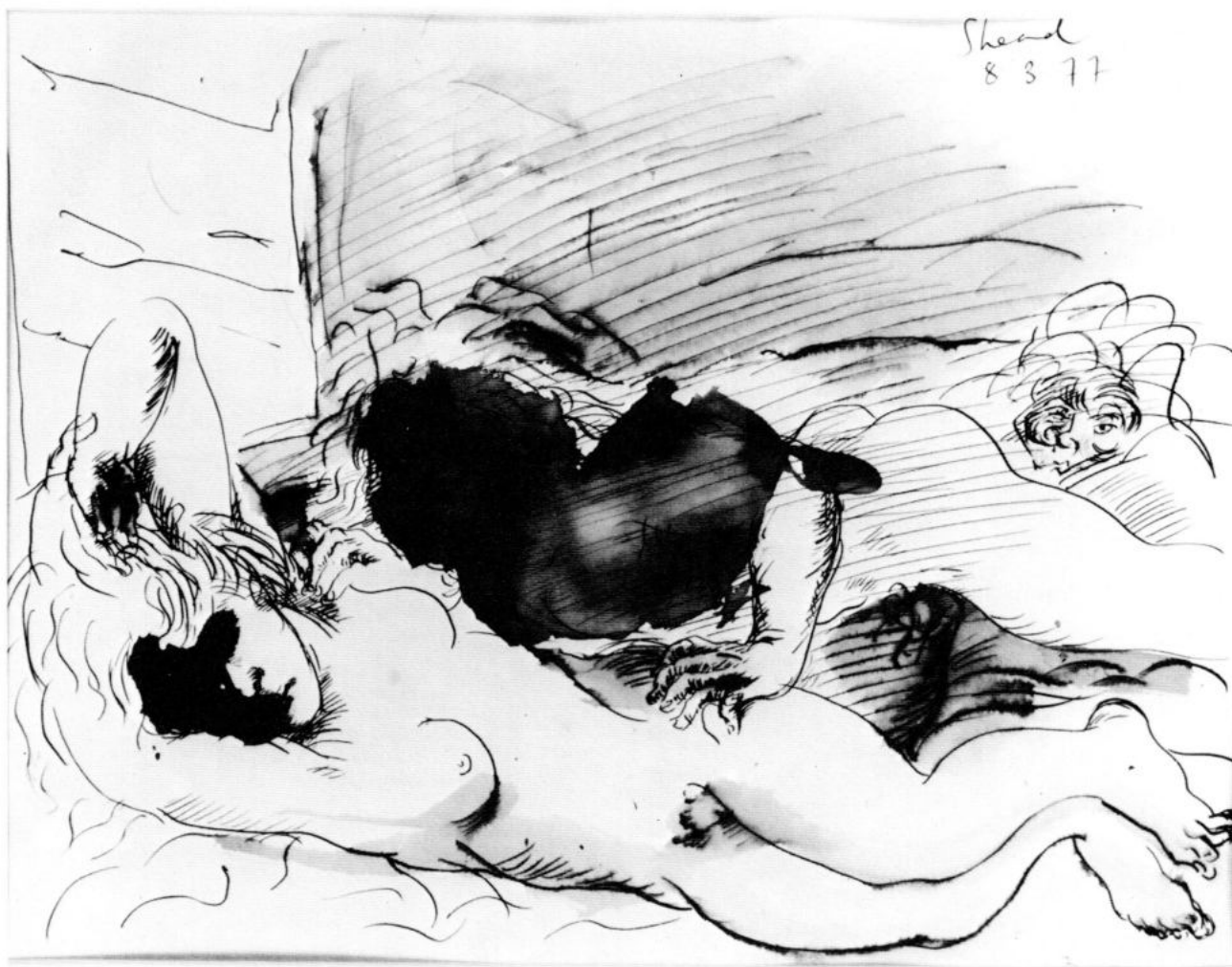


**Rest in the Valley (c. 1975)**  
Donald Friend



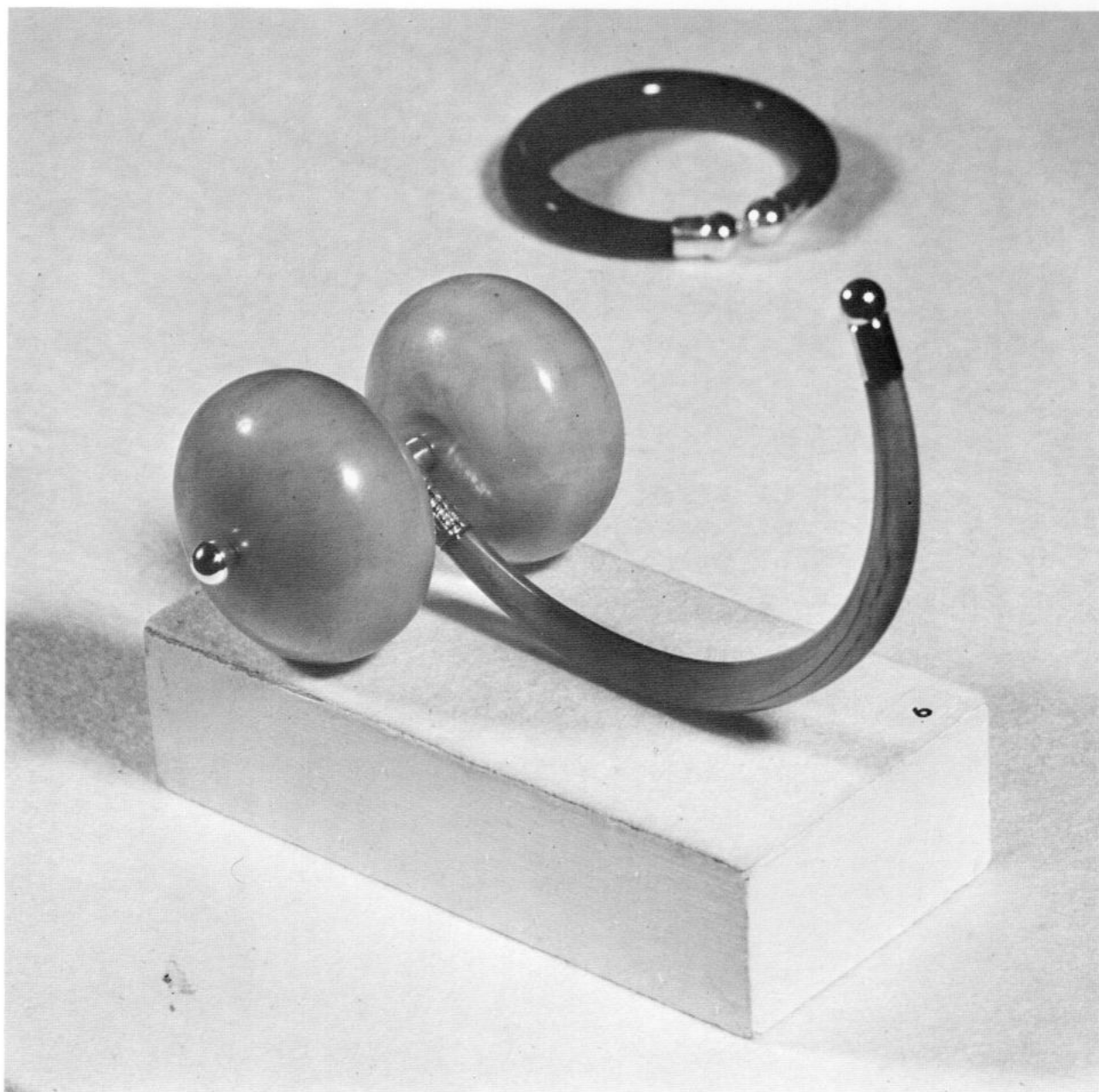


**Sketch for Nude (c. 1975)**  
Donald Friend



**Encounter II (1977)**  
Gary Shedd



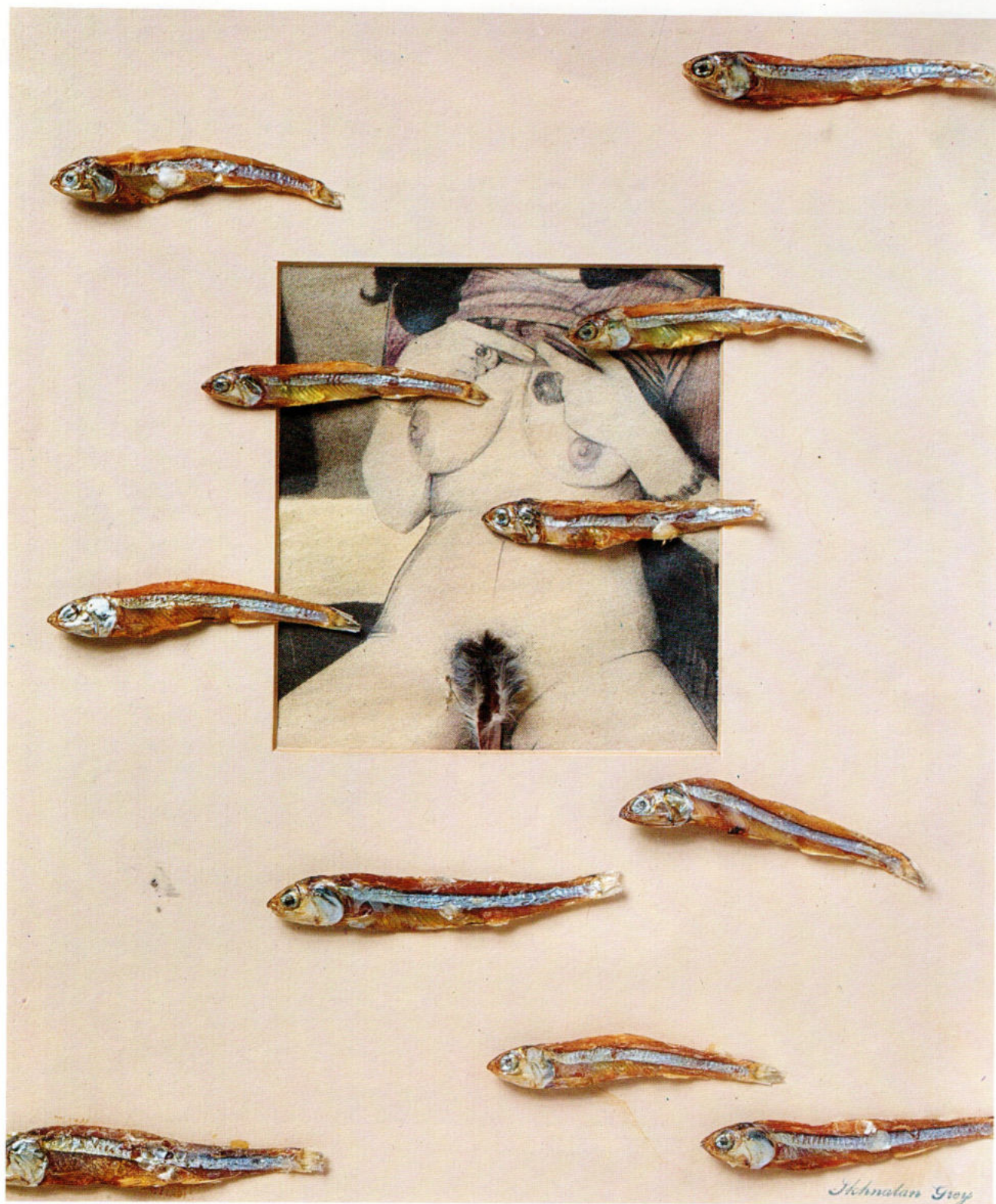


**Cockring with Silver Balls: Executive Toy Horn with  
Amber Balls (1976)**  
Roy Lewis



**The Two Grinning Cleopatras (1973)**  
Murray Walker





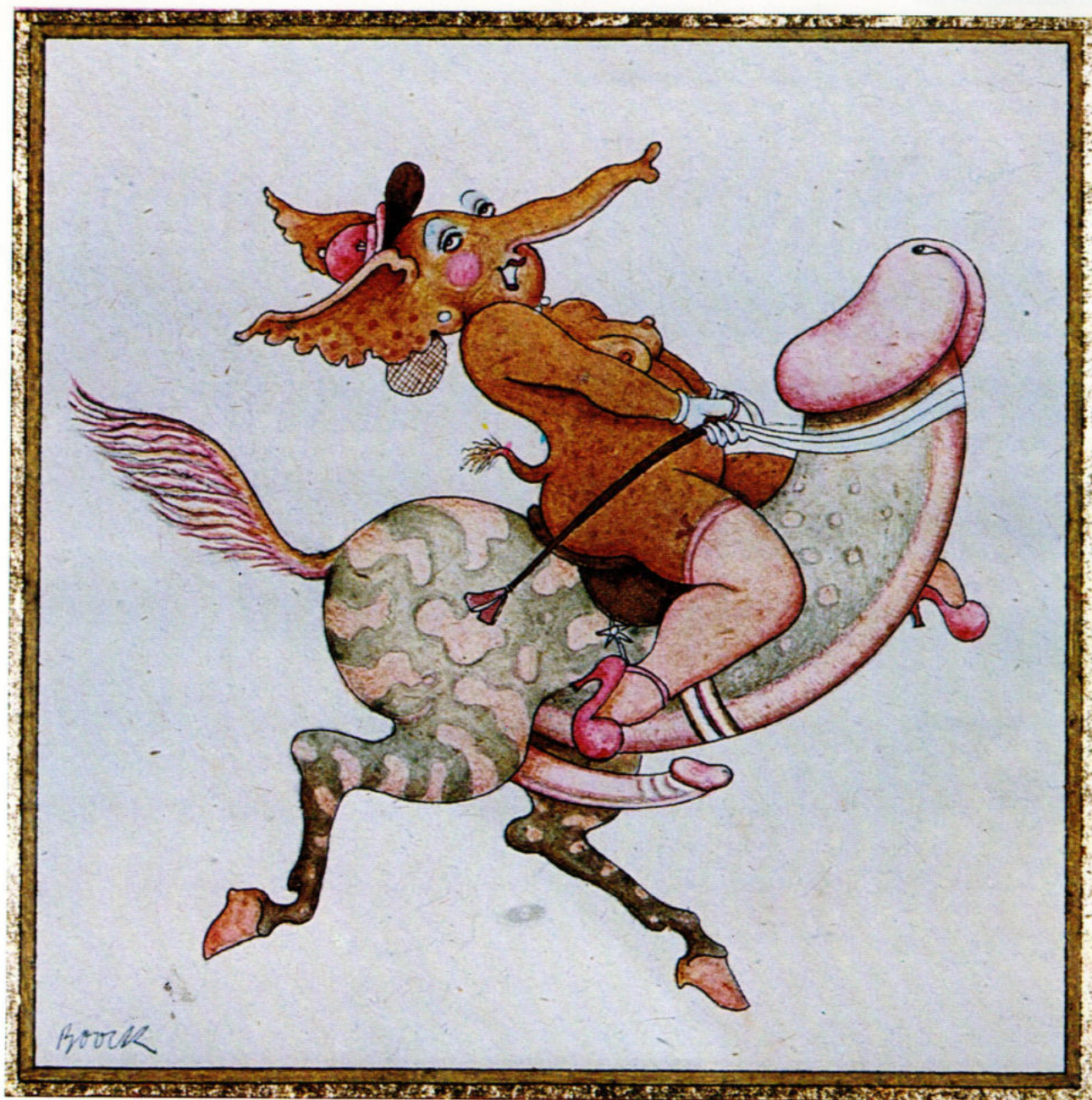
Untitled (1976)  
Thomas Arthur





**Peacock (1975)**  
Christopher Boock





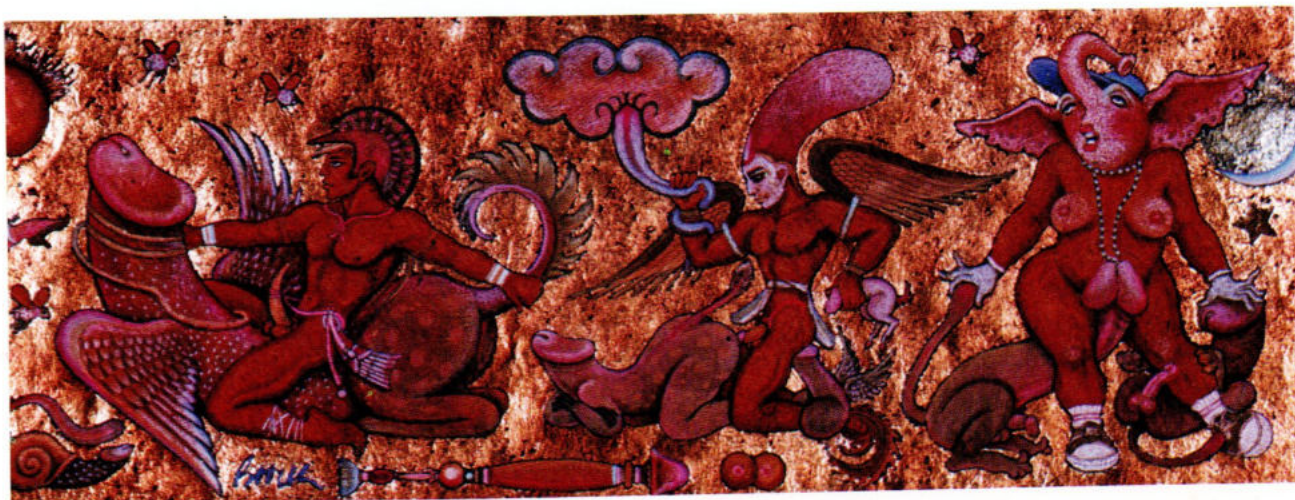
**Toots Trots Out (1976)**  
Christopher Boock



## Acknowledgements

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Daniel Thomas for steering the author in useful directions and David Liddle for taking the majority of the photographs.



**Scroll (1976).** *Detail*  
Christopher Boock





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